

**Is Listening to a Partner' Negative Expressivity Always Detrimental?
The Role of Perceiving Oneself as Instrumental**

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The interpersonal costs of expressing negativity are well-documented. Yet, expressing negativity has sometimes been associated with interpersonal benefits. I propose that negative expressivity can confer relational benefits by giving partners a chance to be instrumental—to facilitate the expressor's goal pursuits—but that it may be difficult to be instrumental in negative expressivity contexts. Across five studies, I examined the role of listener instrumentality in determining the interpersonal consequences of receiving negative disclosures from a romantic partner. In two experiments (Studies 1 and 2), listeners perceived their romantic partners' negative (vs. positive or neutral) disclosures as providing a greater opportunity and invitation for them to be instrumental to the partner. In two subsequent experiments (Studies 3 and 4), listeners who were made to feel instrumental (vs. non-instrumental) when their partners expressed negativity reported more positive perceptions of themselves, their partners, and their relationships. Listeners who were led to feel instrumental even reaped relational benefits beyond those of participants in a non-disclosure control condition; listeners who were led to feel non-instrumental incurred relational costs. In a correlational study of romantic couples (Study 5), listeners who reported greater situational instrumentality after a face-to-face interaction in which their partner made a negative disclosure and those who reported chronically high perceptions of their instrumentality when their partner came to them for support reported interpersonal benefits in comparison to those who reported lower situational or chronic instrumentality. Furthermore,

there was some evidence that listener instrumentality moderated the effects of a discloser's chronic and situational negative expressivity on listener outcomes. Taken together, these studies suggest that listener instrumentality is critical in determining the effects a partner's negative expressivity.

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1.0 Introduction

Forming and maintain close relationships is of paramount importance to people (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Close relationships afford many benefits. For example, having high-quality close relationships is associated with increased happiness and well-being (e.g., Diener & Diener, 1995; Reis et al., 2000) and with improved physical health and lower rates of mortality (e.g., House et al., 1988; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Robles et al., 2014; Slatcher, 2010). Close relationship partners also provide a sense of security (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bowlby, 1969) and comfort in times of distress (Feeney & Collins, 2015).

1.1 Expressivity's Impacts on Partners and Relationships

Expressivity—the combination of self-disclosure and emotion expression (Forest & Wood, 2011)—is considered a key ingredient of high-quality relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Berscheid & Regan, 2005). Close relationship partners frequently seek out opportunities to reveal personal information about themselves (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Cozby 1973; Wheelless, 1976) and express their emotions to one another (Clark & Finkel, 2004; Rimé, 1995; Rimé, 2020; Rimé, 2009; Rimé et al., 1991). Doing so is critical for intimacy development (Laurenceau et al., 1998; Reis, 2017; Reis & Shaver, 1988). People disclose more to those whom they initially like, and when one person discloses to another, both the discloser and disclosure recipient (also referred to hereafter as “listener”) come to like one another more (see Collins & Miller, 1994, for a review). People who frequently express emotion also report greater liking for and closeness

with others, value time spent with others more (Burgin et al., 2012), and have more satisfying and stable relationships than those who do not (Clark et al., 2001; Graham et al., 2008; Sedikides et al., 1999; Sprecher, 1987; Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004).

Expressivity also confers intrapersonal benefits. Decades of research have revealed that expressing one's emotions to others is personally rewarding (e.g., Greene et al., 2006; Frattaroli, 2006; Jourard, 1959; Tamir & Mitchell, 2012) and may promote physical and psychological well-being (e.g., Pennebaker & Beall, 1986; Pennebaker et al., 1988; Stanton et al., 2002), at least when the listener reacts constructively (Gable et al., 2004; Greene et al., 2006; Greene et al., 2003). Although expressivity often has intrapersonal benefits for the discloser, I focus here on interpersonal consequences of expressivity—that is, the way in which a discloser's expressivity affects the receiving partner (i.e., “listener”). I focus on the listener's outcomes, because, as I describe shortly, the ways in which disclosures affect listeners is not well understood.

Although expressing one's thoughts and feelings to a partner has the potential to enhance that partner's relationship satisfaction and feelings of intimacy (e.g., Aron et al., 1997; Clark et al., 2001; Derlega et al., 1993; Jones & Archer, 1976; Kleinke & Kahn, 1980; Reis & Shaver, 1988; Sprecher, 1987; Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004), it may not always do so. To fully understand expressivity's relational impacts, one must consider what is expressed. In particular, the valence of the expressivity is likely to affect how listeners feel about the disclosure, the person who makes the disclosure (i.e., the discloser), and the relationship with that discloser.

Individuals express both positive and negative thoughts and feelings to their relationship partners (Rimé, 2009). For example, people share good news and express positive emotions such as happiness, love, and gratitude. They also tell others when bad things happen and express

negative emotions such as sadness, fear, and anxiety. Although relationship partners sometimes express thoughts and feelings about the partner or the relationship to one another (e.g., expressing regard for partner; raising relationship complaints), I focused on disclosures that are *not* about or directed at the partner—that is, personal event disclosures about things that occur outside of the relationship. Whereas a great deal of relationship research has examined how couples discuss negative thoughts and feelings about the relationship (e.g., in conflict situations), far less is known about the effects of negative disclosures about topics outside of the relationship.

Strong evidence suggests that positive expressivity typically has desirable interpersonal consequences (e.g., Clark & Taraban, 1991; see Gable & Reis, 2010; Gable et al., 2004; Park et al., 2019; Reis et al., 2010). For example, expressing happiness (vs. no emotion) leads to greater liking from strangers (Clark & Taraban, 1991). When partners express gratitude, recipients experience heightened feelings of social value (Grant & Gino, 2010). Some research has considered possible downsides to expressing positivity to others (e.g., when disclosure recipients respond passively or destructively; Gable et al., 2004; instances of bragging that result in decreased liking; Scopelliti et al., 2015). However, the bulk of research that has examined positive expressivity's effects has concluded that expressing positivity to others—especially close relationship partners—enhances relational outcomes (see Gable & Reis, 2010; Peters et al., 2018).

The evidence linking *negative* expressivity with relationship outcomes is less consistent. It is clear that people routinely experience and express negative emotions to others (e.g., Harber & Cohen, 2005; Rimé, 2009), particularly to close relationship partners (Clark & Finkel, 2004). Much evidence suggests that negative expressivity is costly for relationships (e.g., resulting in

decreases in listener relationship satisfaction and liking for the discloser). However, there is some evidence that suggests that negative expressivity can actually benefit relationships (e.g., resulting in increased liking for the discloser). Below, I discuss the mixed evidence regarding negative expressivity's effect on listener outcomes.

1.2 Interpersonal Consequences of Negative Expressivity

The majority of work on negative expressivity's interpersonal consequences has suggested that negative expressivity brings about undesirable interpersonal consequences (e.g., Chervonsky & Hunt, 2017; Tavris, 1984). Receiving a negative disclosure from a partner may be costly for the listener for several reasons. First, being the recipient of negative expressivity may result in an aversive experience for the listener. It may lead listeners to "catch" the discloser's negative mood through a process of mood contagion (Hatfield et al., 1994; Neumann & Strack, 2000). Listening to others' negativity can also be experienced as burdensome, stressful, and unpleasant (e.g., Belle, 1982; Benazon & Coyne, 2000; Coyne et al., 1987; Coyne et al., 2002; Pennebaker & Harber, 1993; Shortt & Pennebaker, 1992; Strack & Coyne, 1983). For example, listeners reported feeling upset and nervous in response to hearing others recount personal stories about WWII (Shortt & Pennebaker, 1992). In another investigation, people felt more anxious, depressed, and hostile after conversing with someone with a depressed (vs. not depressed) mood (Strack & Coyne, 1983). However, a great deal of the work suggesting that negative expressivity has adverse effects on listeners and relationships comes from the depression literature or from research on listening to trauma victims (see Wood & Forest, 2016). It is unclear whether

listening to more mundane, day-to-day negative expressions would have the same interpersonal costs.

Although less work has examined the aversive effects of negative expressivity outside of the contexts of depression or trauma, some work does link negative expressivity in other contexts to aversive experiences for the listener (Capps & Bonanno, 2000; Collins et al., 2014). For example, spouses who perceived their partner to be expressing greater distress during a stressful lab task reported greater distress themselves (Collins et al., 2014).

Listeners who receive negative disclosures from a partner may also feel responsible for meeting the discloser's needs and facilitating their goals. Negative expressions from a partner signal that the disclosing partner's needs are not being met (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Graham et al., 2008). This may impose an obligation on the listener to try and meet those needs (Clark & Taraban, 1991; Coyne, 1976; Coyne et al., 1987; Gergen & Wishnov, 1965). In support of this possibility, people who express negative emotions are seen as more dependent on listeners than are people express positive or no emotion (Clark & Taraban, 1991; Gergen & Wishnov, 1965). Communal relationship partners—those who have a high concern for the welfare of the other and feel a special responsibility for caring for the other (Clark & Mills, 1979)—may be especially motivated to meet a discloser's needs following a negative expression. People often have such communal relationships with romantic partners, friends, and family members (Clark & Mills, 1979). Although relationship partners often want to do so, as I elaborate shortly, it is often difficult to help distressed partners (Dunkel-Schetter & Bennett, 1990; Gable et al., 2012). Thus, the aversive experience of listening to negativity and the frustration of not being able to meet a partner's needs may affect listeners' evaluations of themselves, their partner, and their relationship. In support of this possibility, people induced to experience negative mood states

tend to evaluate others more negatively (e.g., Bower, 1981; Forgas et al., 1984; Griffitt, 1970). Furthermore, partners of individuals who express a great deal of negativity (e.g., depressed individuals; Coyne et al., 2002; individuals with high negativity baselines; Forest et al., 2014)—who may feel that they have failed to meet their partner’s needs because of the continued negative expressivity—often report negative interpersonal outcomes such as relationship problems and marital distress.

Another negative consequence of negative expressivity is that it may lead listeners to harbor negative attitudes and evaluations of the discloser (or their relationship with the discloser) as a result of a partner’s negative disclosure. This has been shown in correlational (e.g., Capps & Bonanno, 2000; Orben & Dunbar, 2017) and experimental (e.g., Caltabiano & Smith, 1983; Clark & Taraban, 1991; Gilbert & Horenstein, 1975; Lazowski & Anderson, 1990) work in contexts with strangers (e.g., Coates et al., 1979; Dalto et al., 1979; Gergen & Wishnov, 1965; Hecht et al., 1979; Sommers, 1984), existing relationship partners (e.g., teachers/students; Cayanus & Martin, 2008; Lannutti & Straumann, 2006; Sorensen, 1989; friends/romantic couples; Yoo et al., 2011), and in online contexts (e.g., Bazarova, 2012; Forest & Wood, 2012). For example, participants reported greater avoidance of a target when he expressed more (vs. less) negativity in his bereavement narrative (Capps & Bonanno, 2000). In another investigation, participants reported lower attraction to a confederate when he disclosed negative facts about himself rather than positive facts about himself (Gilbert & Horenstein, 1975). Students evaluate teachers more negatively when they make negative disclosures about themselves (vs. when they do not; Cayanus & Martin, 2008). Coders liked people who expressed high levels of negativity on social media less than people who expressed less negativity (Forest & Wood, 2012). There is also robust evidence illustrating that people who express a great deal of negativity (e.g.,

pessimists, depressed individuals, individuals high in neuroticism or negative affectivity) are liked less and evaluated more poorly than their counterparts who score lower on these dimensions (e.g., Averill, 1983; Buss, 1991; Coyne, 1976; Dodge & Coie, 1987; Hammen & Peters, 1978; Helweg-Larsen et al., 2002; Kelly & Conley, 1987; Locke & Horowitz, 1990; Strack & Coyne, 1983; Vollmann & Renner, 2010; Vollmann et al., 2007; Winer et al., 1981).

Despite the wealth of evidence described above suggesting that negative expressivity can be interpersonally costly, other work has suggested that negative expressivity can have a beneficial influence on relationships under some conditions (e.g., Baker et al., 2014; Graham et al., 2008; Gromet & Pronin, 2009; Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001). When a discloser expresses negativity, this may signal the discloser's trust in and desire for connection with the listener (Graham et al., 2008; Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001). It may also heighten intimacy (Kashdan et al., 2007) and lead the listener to gain a better understanding of the discloser and their needs and goals (Baker et al., 2014; Gromet & Pronin, 2009; Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001). Although positive expressivity can also heighten intimacy, negative expressivity should be especially good at signaling trust and desire to connect and enhancing intimacy (Laurenceau et al., 1998; Von Culin et al., 2017) because of the risks and vulnerability inherent in expressing negativity (Clark & Taraban, 1991; Gromet & Pronin, 1990; Howell & Conway, 1990; Strack & Coyne, 1983; Winer et al., 1981). For example, when one expresses negativity, one's partner may think less of oneself, criticize, or betray one's confidences (Forest & Wood, 2011; Gaucher et al., 2012). Expressing negativity in spite of these risks may send a powerful message of trust and desire to connect to the recipient.

In addition to the work discussed above highlighting the negative effect that a partner's negative expressivity has on the listener and the listener's relationship with the discloser, there

have also been studies that suggest that the effects of negative expressivity on listener's outcomes may vary as a function of relationship features or outcomes assessed. For example, some work suggests that listening to a partner's negative disclosures results in negative evaluations of the discloser only in exchange (but not in communal) relationships (Clark & Taraban, 1991) or in relationships characterized by low (but not high) communal motivation (Yoo et al., 2011) or low to moderate (but not high) closeness (Rains & Brunner, 2018). Other work has found negative effects on the listener's interpersonal outcomes following a partner's negative expressivity on some, but not all, outcomes of interest (Alea et al., 2018; Rains & Brunner, 2018). For example, listeners reported liking a negative storyteller less than a positive storyteller, but felt equally close to the storyteller regardless of whether the story was positive or negative (Alea et al., 2018).

Furthermore, some work has found that negative expressions from a partner do not result in costs for listeners (Graham et al., 2008; Uehara et al., 2018) and may result in interpersonal benefits in some cases (Shimanoff, 1987; Trobst et al., 1994). For example, participants who imagined that their roommate expressed negativity (i.e., sadness, anxiety) or interacted with a confederate who expressed negativity (i.e., nervousness) did not report liking the discloser any less compared to when the discloser did not express any emotion (Graham et al., 2008). In another study by the same authors, participants who reported greater (vs. less) willingness to express negative emotions reported a greater number of social ties and more intimacy in their relationships (Graham et al., 2008). Furthermore, some work has shown that listeners report more positive evaluations of a discloser following a negative disclosure. For example, participants rated a target more favorably when they expressed high (vs. low) distress when dealing with a romantic breakup (Trobst et al., 1994). In another study, participants had more

positive attitudes toward their spouse when they imagined that their spouse disclosed something negative (vs. no emotion) to them about something outside of the relationship (Shimanoff, 1978).

1.3 The Proposed Moderating Role of Listener Instrumentality

To date, the seemingly discrepant findings regarding negative expressivity's interpersonal consequences have not been fully explained. To better understand negative expressivity's interpersonal impacts, the literature is in need of research that examines when or for whom listening to negative expressivity harms versus benefits relational outcomes. In the present investigation, I begin to address this gap in knowledge by examining what I propose is a critical moderator of negative expressivity's effects on listeners. Understanding the conditions under which negative expressivity has desirable versus undesirable interpersonal consequences is critical for a thorough understanding of the ways in which people's communication patterns affect their close relationships. It also has important real-world implications for how people manage their negative emotions and make decisions about what (and how) to disclose.

I propose that one reason for the mixed findings described above is that negative expressivity provides a valuable opportunity for partners to deepen their connections, but that in many cases, this opportunity is not realized, resulting in frustration and negative sentiments. Specifically, I propose that, because negative disclosures signal that something is wrong and that help is needed (Fisher & Manstead, 2008; Graham et al., 2008), negative expressivity invites and affords opportunities for listeners to be instrumental to their partners—that is, to facilitate, support, or enable the disclosing partner's goal pursuit in some way (e.g., Fitzsimons & Shah, 2008; Orehek, Forest, & Barbaro, 2018). Ample research reveals that when people are

instrumental to their partners, this brings about relational benefits, such as increased closeness (Inagaki & Eisenberger, 2012; Inagaki & Orehek, 2017; Orehek, Forest, & Barbaro, 2018; Orehek, Forest, & Wingrove, 2018). However, although negative expressions may present an opportunity for partners to be instrumental, I propose that it is often hard for listeners to actually *be* instrumental in negative disclosure contexts. As such, I suggest that listeners often doubt their instrumentality and end up feeling badly following a partner's negative disclosure. I therefore propose that the listener's feelings of instrumentality in negative disclosure contexts are a critical moderator of negative expressivity's effects on the listener's experience of the disclosure interaction, evaluation of the self, and perceptions of the partner and relationship. I hypothesize a positive relation between listeners' perceptions of their own instrumentality and listeners' outcomes: Specifically, I expect that when listeners feel more instrumental (vs. less instrumental) to their partner's goals in negative disclosure interactions, they will experience those interactions as more pleasant and less aversive and will feel better about themselves, their partners, and their relationship.

1.4 Negative Expressivity as an Opportunity for Listener Instrumentality

I propose that one benefit of negative expressivity is that negative disclosures afford an opportunity for listeners to be instrumental to their partner—to facilitate the discloser's progress toward their goals. In fact, I propose that negative expressivity may even be seen as *inviting* the listening partner to be instrumental. Unlike instrumental support—which is typically defined in the support literature as providing task-oriented, tangible support or resources (House, 1981; Malecki & Demaray, 2003)—when I refer to listener instrumentality, I am referring to a broader

set of ways in which a listener can facilitate their disclosing partner's goals. In negative disclosure contexts, being instrumental could involve solving a problem that the discloser is facing, providing emotional support or validation, or freeing up time for the discloser to pursue a goal on their own, for example, depending on the goals of the discloser in that interaction.

Negative disclosure contexts should provide particularly good opportunities for partner instrumentality because negative emotions serve the important function of signaling that something is wrong—that the discloser's needs are not currently being met and goals have not been achieved (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Graham et al., 2008; Levenson, 1994; Moberly & Watkins, 2010; Nesse & Ellsworth, 2009). Communal partners should be highly motivated to be instrumental when their partner expresses need; partners in communal relationships frequently share emotions and are sensitive and responsive to each other's needs (e.g., Clark & Finkel, 2005; Clark et al., 1986). Thus, hearing a negative disclosure from a close relationship partner should prompt listeners to be, or at least try to be, instrumental to their partner.

The important role that romantic partners play in each other's goal pursuits has been recognized in several prominent relationship theories, including Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1989), Interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978), the Michelangelo phenomenon (Rusbult et al., 2009), and Transactive goal dynamics theory (TGD; Fitzsimons et al., 2015). In fact, a major benefit of close relationships lies in relationship partners' ability to help one another's goal pursuits by serving an instrumental means to each other (Fitzsimons et al., 2015; La Guardia et al., 2000; Orehek & Forest, 2016; Orehek, Forest, & Barbaro, 2018; Orehek, Forest, & Wingrove, 2018; Rusbult et al., 2009).

The People-As-Means (see Orehek & Forest, 2016; Orehek, Forest, & Barbaro, 2018) approach highlights that relationship partners serve as instrumental means to each other's goals

and that evaluations of partners and the relationship are shaped by how instrumental one views oneself as being and how instrumental one views one's partner as being. Relationship partners enjoy being instrumental to one another. For example, feeling instrumental to others offers *intrapersonal* rewards—for example, greater personal importance, esteem, competence, value, and belongingness from their ability to help others (Gruenewald et al., 2012; Inagaki & Orehek, 2017; Orehek, 2018; Orehek & Weaverling, 2017; Piferi & Lawler, 2006). The support literature also shows that providing support to others (which presumably leads to feelings of instrumentality if successful) is intrapersonally rewarding. For example, providing support to others can provide intrapersonal benefits such as increased happiness (Nelson et al., 2016), self-esteem (Elliot et al., 2004; Gruenewald et al., 2012; Piferi & Lawler, 2006), mood (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Gleason et al., 2003), improved health and reduced risk of mortality (Brown et al., 2003; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), and reduced stress (Cialdini et al., 1973; Inagaki et al., 2016; Midlarsky, 1991; Poulin et al., 2013; Taylor et al. 2000). Feeling instrumental is also *interpersonally* rewarding—resulting in enhanced feelings of social connection with the support recipient (Inagaki & Eisenberger, 2012; Inagaki & Orehek, 2017; Orehek, Forest, & Wingrove, 2018). If, as I propose, negative disclosures present an opportunity for partner instrumentality and even invite that instrumentality, listeners who perceive that they have been quite instrumental should experience negative disclosure interactions as less aversive than those who perceive that they have been less instrumental, and should report less negative evaluations of themselves, their partners, and relationships in these negative disclosure contexts.

1.5 Challenges of Being Instrumental to Negative Disclosures

Actually *being* instrumental when a partner expresses negativity may be quite challenging. Providing responsive support is known to be difficult (Dunkel-Schetter & Bennett, 1990; Gable et al., 2012) and providers' good intentions are not sufficient to ensure positive outcomes when providing support (Burleson, 2003; Marigold et al., 2014). Providing support for negative events is particularly challenging because it requires skill and sensitivity (Gable et al., 2012; Marigold et al., 2014; Neff & Karney, 2005; Rafaeli & Gleason, 2009).

Providing support that does not actually facilitate the discloser's progress toward their goals—support efforts that should lead providers to feel non-instrumental—is associated with negative outcomes. People often provide support that does not meet their partner's needs (Bolger et al., 2000; Gable et al., 2012; Marigold et al., 2014; see also Rafaeli & Gleason, 2009). Providing the wrong kind of support can lead to negative outcomes for the provider and recipient of support (Gable et al., 2012; Marigold et al., 2014). The costs of providing support to someone who needs constant support provision (e.g., because they suffer from a chronic health problem), termed “caregiver burnout syndrome,” have also been well documented (see Taylor, 2011). For example, chronic caregivers report increased stress, degenerative health, and decreased life satisfaction (Boschen et al., 2005; Canam & Acorn, 1999; Grant et al., 2000; Helgeson, 1993; Kolakowsky-Hayner et al., 2001; Meade et al., 2004). I expect that constant support provision may lead providers to feel non-instrumental (or at least, less instrumental than someone who provides support to a partner whose needs are more acute). Consistent with this idea, the perception that one can effectively help someone else is positively associated with support provision (Bandura et al., 2003; Caprara & Steca, 2005). Furthermore, caregiving for a partner

who one is less likely to be able to effectively help is associated with poorer caregiver health (Ory et al., 1999; Pinquart & Sorensen, 2007).

1.6 Reconciling Negative Expressivity's Effect on Listener's Outcomes

I propose that negative expressivity from a partner provides an opportunity for listeners to be instrumental to their partner, but that because actually being instrumental in response to a partner's negative disclosures is difficult, many listeners end up feeling non-instrumental. When this occurs, listeners may feel badly about the disclosure interaction, themselves, their partner, and the relationship. In contrast, if listeners can capitalize on the opportunity that negative disclosures provide and are able to feel instrumental to their partner, they should avoid these costly outcomes and may even reap interpersonal benefits. This perspective may help reconcile the mixed findings described above regarding the consequences of a partner's negative expressivity for listeners.

Consideration of the role that instrumentality may have played in existing studies of negative expressivity's effects suggest some interesting patterns. Specifically, many of the findings linking a partner's negative expressivity to negative outcomes for the listener come from studies in which participants presumably lacked the opportunity to be instrumental (e.g., in paradigms in which participants did not interact with the disclosing confederate; Capps & Bonanno, 2000; Gergen & Wishnov, 1965; Sommers, 1984) or lacked the motivation to be instrumental (e.g., in interactions with strangers; Caltabiano & Smithson, 1983; Gilbert & Horenstein, 1975; Gromet & Pronin, 2009; in interactions with partners in low-quality, low closeness, or exchange relationships; Clark & Taraban, 1991; Rains & Brunner, 2018; Yoo et al.,

2011; with partners who likely expressed a great deal of negativity because they had low self-esteem; Forest & Wood, 2012; or depression; Locke & Horowitz, 1990).

In contrast, the findings linking a partner's negative expressivity to positive outcomes often come from studies involving imagining negative expressions from close relationship partners (Graham et al., 2008; Shimanoff, 1978; Uehara et al., 2018) or scenarios in which willingness to help was measured (Graham et al., 2018; Trobst et al., 1994). In each of these scenarios, participants may have believed they would be able to effectively meet the needs and facilitate the goals of the disclosers—that is, these scenarios were likely to lead to high feelings of instrumentality. Furthermore, Graham and colleagues (2008) found that a greater willingness to express negative emotions was associated with developing more social ties and greater intimacy within those relationships over time. It seems plausible that people who are more willing to express negative emotions to others may provide better opportunities for others to be instrumental to them. However, this finding shows that *willingness* to express negativity leads to interpersonal benefits. It does not account for actual negativity that is present in real disclosures made to others.

1.7 The Present Work

In the current work, I focused on disclosures from romantic partners. Romantic partners are among the most frequent targets of disclosures (e.g., Clark & Finkel, 2004; Harber & Cohen, 2005; Rimé, 2009) and past work has indicated that people's mood and behavior are often affected by a partner's chronic negativity (e.g., Benazon & Coyne, 2000; Coyne et al., 1987; Forest et al., 2014). For these reasons, I focus here on the role of instrumentality in governing

listener outcomes in negative disclosure contexts involving romantic partners. Drawing on theory and research on emotion, close relationships, and instrumentality outlined above, I propose that listener perceptions of instrumentality may explain when and why negative expressivity from a partner is interpersonally costly or beneficial. I do so by examining whether negative expressions provide an opportunity for partners to be instrumental, whether it is difficult to be instrumental in such contexts, and by examining listener outcomes such as perceptions of the interaction, self, partner, and relationship. I focused on listeners' perceptions of instrumentality (as opposed to disclosers' perceptions of listeners' instrumentality or some more objective index of instrumentality) because prior work highlights the importance of *perceived* instrumentality (e.g., Orehek, Forest, & Wingrove, 2018) and of perceiving oneself as instrumental to others in particular (e.g., Inagaki & Orehek, 2017). Furthermore, prior work reveals that perceptions of one's own support effectiveness are positively associated with support provision (Bandura et al., 2003; Caprara & Steca, 2005). Thus, regardless of how instrumental a listener has actually been or how instrumental the discloser perceives the listener to have been, I expect that when listeners perceive themselves as having been highly instrumental, relational benefits should follow. I tested this proposition in several studies, employing a mix of correlational and experimental approaches. Throughout these studies, I had several aims:

Aim 1. Examine whether negative disclosures provide a particularly good opportunity for listeners to be instrumental and are seen as invitations for listeners to be instrumental.

Aim 2. Investigate whether it is particularly challenging for listeners to be instrumental in negative disclosure contexts.

Aim 3. Examine the role of listener's perceived instrumentality in determining the interpersonal consequences of receiving negative (as well as positive) disclosures from a romantic partner.

Aim 4. Examine whether listener's perceived instrumentality moderates the effects of the discloser's chronic and situational negative expressivity on listener outcomes in romantic couples.

Support for my hypotheses would reveal that negative expressivity presents an opportunity for listeners to build and maintain high-quality relationships, but that listeners are not often able to capitalize on this opportunity because it is difficult to be instrumental in such contexts. When listeners are not able to be instrumental, they should experience negative disclosure interactions as aversive and incur interpersonal costs; when listeners are able to be instrumental, they should avoid these negative outcomes and may instead experience certain rewards. I addressed these aims in four experimental studies and one correlational study. This marks the first attempt to empirically investigate listeners' feelings of instrumentality as a key moderator of disclosers' negative expressivity's effects on listener outcomes. Below I describe each study, the hypotheses tested in each, and the relevant findings.

2.0 Study 1

Study 1 allowed me to examine Aims 1 and 2. Relevant to Aim 1, I examined whether negative disclosures provide a particularly good opportunity for and are seen as invitations for the listener to be instrumental. I hypothesized that participants put in the role of listener who received a negative disclosure would perceive the disclosure as providing a greater opportunity (H1A) and invitation (H1B) for instrumentality in comparison to participants who received a neutral or positive disclosure. Relevant to Aim 2—to examine whether it is challenging for listeners to be instrumental in response to negative disclosures—I hypothesized that participants who received a negative disclosure would report greater uncertainty about how to be instrumental in response to the disclosure than participants who received a neutral or positive disclosure (H2A).

To test these hypotheses, I used a paradigm in which participants were asked to imagine receiving a particular (scripted) disclosure from their romantic partner. Participants were randomly assigned to imagine receiving one of three disclosures: a negative, positive, or neutral disclosure. They then reported on their perceptions of that disclosure. An advantage of this design is that all participants within a given disclosure valence condition (negative; positive; neutral) interpreted an identical partner disclosure.

2.1 Method

2.1.1 Participants

Three hundred timeslots were posted using the psychology subject pool at a large American university to recruit romantically-involved individuals for an online study on how people interact with their romantic partners. I reasoned that posting 300 timeslots would result in at least 75 participants in each of the three disclosure valence conditions (negative disclosure; positive disclosure; neutral disclosure) after any exclusions. This sample size is larger than sample sizes employed in similar studies which examined effects of disclosure valence on interpersonal outcomes (e.g., Graham et al., 2008). Sample size was determined before any data analysis took place. Participants received course credit for participation. I collected data from 312 participants.ⁱ Data from 23 participants who reported that they were not actually in a romantic relationship were removed before analyses began. An additional 17 participants did not complete the dependent measures. Thus, data from 272 participants who met the recruitment criteria could be included in analyses (136 female; 135 male; 1 unknown; $M_{\text{age}} = 18.99$, $SD = 1.73$; $M_{\text{relationship length}} = 10.27$ months, $SD = 11.82$).

2.1.2 Procedure

The study employed a between-participants design with 3 conditions (disclosure valence condition: negative, positive, or neutral). Participants read a consent script, completed demographic and individual difference measures, and were randomly assigned to disclosure valence condition (*ns* per condition: 93 negative disclosure; 94 positive disclosure, 85 neutral

disclosure). Participants were asked to imagine that their romantic partner called them on the phone during their lunch time. In the negative disclosure valence condition, participants were asked to imagine that their partner had said: “I’m really upset. I made a big mistake at work and now I’m really nervous that I could get in a lot of trouble for it.” In the positive disclosure valence condition, participants were asked to imagine that their partner had said: “I’m really happy. I just got a big compliment from my boss about something I did at work and now I’m excited to see if a promotion is in my future.” In the neutral disclosure valence condition, participants were asked to imagine that their partner had said: “I saw this new organization program at work today. I think it’s something I’ll learn to use in the future.” Finally, participants completed dependent measures and were asked to confirm whether they were truly in a romantic relationship.

2.1.3 Measures

Dependent measures are described in the order in which they were administered. Only measures relevant to the hypotheses being tested in this dissertation are described here. See Appendix A for full materials.

2.1.3.1 Opportunity for Instrumentality

Participants completed three items ($\alpha = .63$) that assessed their perceptions that the disclosure provided an opportunity for them to be instrumental to their partner (e.g., “To what extent is there a chance for you to help your partner with a goal that he/she has?”; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*).

2.1.3.2 Invitation for Instrumentality

Participants completed four items ($\alpha = .71$) that assessed their perceptions that the disclosure indicated that their partner was inviting them to be instrumental to the partner's goals (e.g., "To what extent is your partner inviting you to help/support him/her?"; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*).

2.1.3.3 Certainty About How to Be Instrumental

Participants completed three items ($\alpha = .66$) that assessed the extent to which they were certain about how to be instrumental after their partner's disclosure (e.g., "To what extent is it clear what you should do next?"; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*).

2.1.3.4 Manipulation Check

To ensure that the disclosure valence conditions differed as intended, participants completed two items ($r[270] = -.68, p < .001$) that assessed their perceptions of the valence of the imagined disclosure: "How much positive emotion was expressed in the scenario you imagined?" and "How much negative emotion was expressed in the scenario you imagined?" (1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*). The negative emotion item was reversed-scored before the two items were averaged to form an index of disclosure valence, such that higher scores reflect more positive valence.

2.2 Results

All analyses were one-way ANOVAs with disclosure valence condition as the independent variable. Planned comparisons were conducted to determine which conditions differed from one another.

2.2.1 Manipulation Check

Before turning to my hypothesis tests, I first examined whether the valence condition manipulation was successful. The ANOVA revealed a significant effect of disclosure valence condition on participants' reports of disclosure valence, $F(2, 269) = 80.50, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .374$. Planned comparisons revealed that disclosure valence conditions differed as intended: The negative disclosure condition ($M = 4.35, SD = 1.33$) resulted in the lowest levels of positive valence, followed by the neutral disclosure condition ($M = 5.59, SD = 1.10$), which resulted in lower levels of positive valence than the positive disclosure condition ($M = 6.34, SD = .72; ps < .001$).

2.2.2 H1A

In support of H1A, participants in the negative disclosure condition ($M = 5.58, SD = 1.15$) reported greater perceptions that the disclosure provided an opportunity for instrumentality than those in the positive ($M = 4.49, SD = 1.28$) and neutral ($M = 4.94, SD = .99; ps < .001$) disclosure conditions, $F(2, 269) = 24.96, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .157$. The positive and neutral disclosure conditions differed significantly ($p = .004$).

2.2.3 H1B

Supporting H1B, participants in the negative disclosure condition ($M = 5.78$, $SD = .82$) reported greater perceptions that the disclosure indicated that their partner was inviting them to be instrumental compared to those in the positive ($M = 4.73$, $SD = .98$) and neutral ($M = 4.58$, $SD = .97$; $ps < .001$) disclosure conditions, $F(2, 269) = 45.44$, $p < .001$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .253$. The positive and neutral disclosure conditions did not differ from each other ($p = .280$).

2.2.4 H2A

Supporting H2A, participants in the negative disclosure condition ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.23$) reported less certainty about how to be instrumental than those in the positive ($M = 5.39$, $SD = .99$; $p < .001$), but not neutral ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.22$; $p = .647$) disclosure condition, $F(2, 269) = 11.00$, $p < .001$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .076$. The positive and neutral disclosure conditions differed significantly ($p < .001$).

2.3 Discussion

In Study 1, I investigated whether negative expressivity, relative to positive and neutral expressivity, provides an opportunity for (H1A) and invites (H1B) instrumentality, but also results in greater uncertainty about how to be instrumental (H2A). Supporting H1A and H1B, participants who imagined receiving a negative disclosure from their partner perceived the disclosure as affording an opportunity for and inviting instrumentality more so than participants

who imagined receiving a positive or neutral disclosure. In support of H2A, negative disclosures resulted in less certainty about how to be instrumental (compared to positive, but not neutral disclosures).

3.0 Study 2

In Study 2, I sought to conceptually replicate the effects observed in Study 1 (H1A, H1B, and H2A) using a paradigm in which participants were asked to recall real-life instances in which their romantic partner expressed a negative, positive, or neutral emotion to them. This approach meant that participants within a given disclosure valence condition were not interpreting identical disclosures—only ones that they selected using the instructions for the condition to which they were randomly assigned. This extended Study 1 by: a) considering real-life instances of partner disclosure, b) assessing participants' actual responses to the partner disclosure (through their self-reports), and c) including a range of negative, positive, and neutral disclosure topics that extended beyond the scripted scenarios used in Study 1.

3.1 Method

3.1.1 Participants

Three hundred timeslots were posted between the psychology subject pool at a large American university and online via Prolific to recruit romantically-involved individuals for a study on how people interact with their romantic partners. Prolific is an online recruiting site for participants, similar to Amazon Mechanical Turk. I reasoned that posting 300 timeslots would result in at least 75 participants in each of the three disclosure valence conditions (negative disclosure; positive disclosure; neutral disclosure) after any exclusions. Sample size was

determined before data analysis began. Participants recruited from the psychology pool received course credit and participants recruited via Prolific received \$1.00. I collected data from 334 participants. Data from 19 participants who reported that they were not actually in a romantic relationship were removed before analyses began. An additional 27 participants did not complete the dependent measures. Thus, data from 288 participants who met the recruitment criteria could be included in analyses (134 female; 154 male; $M_{\text{age}} = 29.42$, $SD = 12.20$; $M_{\text{relationship length}} = 76.63$ months, $SD = 100.86$).

3.1.2 Procedure and Measures

The study employed a between-participants design with three conditions (disclosure valence condition: negative, positive, or neutral). Participants read a consent script, completed demographic and individual difference measures, and were randomly assigned to disclosure valence condition (*ns* per condition: 97 negative disclosure; 93 positive disclosure, 98 neutral disclosure). Participants were then asked to recall a conversation that occurred in the past month or two with their romantic partner in which their romantic partner talked about something outside of their relationship (i.e. something the partner was experiencing that was not caused by the participant or their relationship). In the negative disclosure condition, participants were asked to recall a time in which their romantic partner expressed a negative emotion (e.g., sadness, fear, anxiety, frustration) about something outside of the relationship. In the positive disclosure condition, participants were asked to recall a time in which their partner expressed a positive emotion (e.g., happiness, pride, excitement, gratitude) about something outside of the relationship. In the neutral disclosure condition, participants were asked to recall a time when their romantic partner expressed something that they had experienced outside of the relationship,

without expressing positive or negative emotion (e.g., a food they had eaten, a TV show they watched, what they did at work). Participants were asked to answer two questions about the recalled scenario in an open-ended format: “What did your partner talk about in this situation? Please tell us everything that he/she said to you:” and “How did you respond to what your partner said?”

Finally, participants completed dependent measures that were identical to those in Study 1: opportunity for instrumentality (three items; $\alpha = .81$), invitation for instrumentality (four items; $\alpha = .81$), certainty about how to be instrumental (three items; $\alpha = .57$), and a manipulation check assessing how much negativity and positivity was expressed in the recalled expressions (two items; $r[283] = -.43$, $p < .001$). Finally, participants were asked to confirm whether they were truly in a romantic relationship (see Appendix B for full materials for Study 2).

3.2 Results

All analyses were one-way ANOVAs with disclosure valence condition as the independent variable. Planned comparisons were conducted to determine which conditions differed from one another.

3.2.1 Manipulation Check

Before turning to the hypotheses, I first examined whether the valence condition manipulation was successful. The ANOVA revealed a significant effect of disclosure valence condition on the valence manipulation check, $F(2, 281) = 126.57$, $p < .001$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .474$.

Planned comparisons revealed that the disclosure valence conditions differed as intended such that the negative disclosure condition ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.35$) resulted in the lowest levels of positive valence, followed by the neutral disclosure condition ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.13$), which resulted in lower levels of positive valence than the positive disclosure condition ($M = 6.03$, $SD = 1.09$), $ps < .001$. See Table 1 for examples of recalled disclosures from participants who consented to their responses being used in scholarly publications.

3.2.2 H1A

Supporting H1A, participants in the negative disclosure condition ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.23$) reported greater perceptions that the disclosure provided an opportunity for instrumentality than those in the positive ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.66$; $p = .001$) and neutral ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.77$; $p < .001$) disclosure valence conditions, $F(2, 282) = 24.44$, $p < .001$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .148$. The positive and neutral disclosure conditions differed significantly ($p < .001$).

3.2.3 H1B

In support of H1B, participants in the negative disclosure condition ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.14$) reported greater perceptions that the disclosure indicated that their partner was inviting them to be instrumental compared to those in the positive ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.48$; $p = .032$) and neutral ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.66$; $p < .001$) disclosure conditions, $F(2, 285) = 20.00$, $p < .001$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .123$. The positive and neutral disclosure conditions differed significantly ($p < .001$).

3.2.4 H2A

As predicted in H2A, participants in the negative disclosure condition ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.30$) reported less certainty about how to be instrumental than those in the positive ($M = 5.42$, $SD = 1.06$; $p < .001$) and neutral disclosure condition ($M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.28$; $p = .022$), $F(2, 282) = 7.31$, $p = .001$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .049$. The positive and neutral disclosure conditions did not differ ($p = .128$).

3.3 Discussion

Study 2 provided further evidence that negative disclosures provide an especially good opportunity (H1A) and invitation (H1B) for instrumentality from listening partners: Replicating findings from Study 1, negative disclosures (compared to positive and neutral disclosures) resulted in greater perceptions among participants put in the role of listener that there was an opportunity for instrumentality and that the disclosing partner was inviting them to be instrumental. In support of H2A, negative disclosures resulted in greater uncertainty among listeners about how to be instrumental compared to positive and neutral disclosures. These findings suggest that features of negative disclosures should provide a chance for listeners to build and maintain their relationships with disclosers, but that it may be difficult to capitalize on that opportunity and actually be instrumental when a partner expresses negativity.

4.0 Study 3

In Study 3, I further addressed Aim 2, which involved examining whether it is particularly challenging for listeners to be instrumental in *negative* disclosure contexts. I also addressed Aim 3 by examining the role of listener perceived instrumentality in determining interpersonal consequences of receiving negative and positive disclosures from a romantic partner. Study 3 employed a 2 (disclosure valence condition: negative, positive) \times 3 (instrumentality feedback type: high, low, no feedback) between-participants design. Participants imagined receiving a negative or positive disclosure from their romantic partner, imagined they replied with the best of intentions, and received feedback from their partner suggesting high or low instrumentality (or did not receive explicit instrumentality feedback).

Based on past work showing that it is difficult to provide effective support to people who are distressed (e.g., Dunkel-Schetter & Bennett, 1990), I hypothesized that participants who received low instrumentality feedback in the negative disclosure condition would report that this type of feedback is a more common response of their partners in such disclosure contexts than participants who received low instrumentality feedback in the positive disclosure condition (H2B). In exploratory analyses, I also examined whether the inferences listeners made after receiving no instrumentality feedback from a partner would differ when listening to a negative versus positive disclosure. If providing support to distressed partners is especially challenging (Gable et al., 2012) and low instrumentality feedback is more common in negative (vs. positive) disclosure contexts as predicted, then listeners may make more negative assumptions about their instrumentality in the absence of instrumentality feedback, particularly when their partner expresses negativity (compared to positivity).

Relevant to Aim 3, I tested two hypotheses. I hypothesized that listeners who received low instrumentality feedback would report a less pleasant interaction, less positive perceptions of the self, less positive perceived partner feelings about relationship, less positive feelings about the relationship, and lower motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions than listeners who receive high instrumentality feedback (H3A) and that these effects would be mediated by listener perceived instrumentality (H3B). In exploratory analyses, I examined whether listeners who received no instrumentality feedback would report a more or less pleasant interaction, more or less positive perceptions of the self, more or less positive perceived partner feelings about relationship, more or less positive feelings about the relationship, and greater or less motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions compared to those who received low or high instrumentality feedback. Importantly, inclusion of a no feedback condition allowed me to examine whether experiencing low instrumentality is interpersonally costly for listeners or high instrumentality is beneficial (or both) by comparing the effects of receiving low and high instrumentality feedback to the no feedback condition. I also examined whether any such effects would be mediated by listener perceived instrumentality. Finally, I was interested in whether participants would differ in their reports of the pleasantness of the interaction and in their perceptions of the self, partner, and relationship when they received high instrumentality feedback in the negative versus positive disclosure context, and/or when they received low instrumentality feedback in the negative versus positive disclosure context. I did not advance hypotheses about these comparisons.

4.1 Method

4.1.1 Participants

I posted 600 timeslots on Prolific to recruit romantically-involved individuals for an online study on how people interact with their romantic partners. I reasoned that 300 timeslots would result in a sample of at least 75 participants in each of the six cells of our research design (disclosure valence condition: negative, positive; instrumentality feedback type: high, low, no feedback). Sample size was determined before data analysis began. Participants received \$1.00. I collected data from 628 participants. Data from two participants who reported that they were not actually in a relationship were removed before analyses began. An additional 27 participants did not reach the manipulation or any of the dependent measures. Thus, data from 599 participants who met our criteria could be included in analyses (317 female; 275 male; 6 other; $M_{\text{age}} = 35.33$, $SD = 11.99$; $M_{\text{relationship length}} = 113.36$ months, $SD = 119.06$).

4.1.2 Procedure

Participants read a consent script, completed demographic and individual difference measures, and were randomly assigned to a disclosure valence condition (n s per condition: 298 negative disclosure; 301 positive disclosure). Paralleling Study 1, participants were asked to imagine that their romantic partner called them on the phone during their lunch time. In the negative disclosure condition, participants were asked to imagine that their partner had said: “I’m really upset. I made a big mistake at work and now I’m really nervous that I could get in a lot of trouble for it.” In the positive disclosure condition, participants were asked to imagine that their

partner had said: “I’m really happy. I just got a big compliment from my boss about something I did at work and now I’m excited to see if a promotion is in my future.” Participants were then randomly assigned to an instrumentality feedback type condition (*ns* per condition: 199 high instrumentality, 200 low instrumentality, 198 no feedback). Participants were asked to imagine that they respond to their partner, “with the best intentions” but were not given specific information about what they actually said to their partner. Participants in the high instrumentality condition were then asked to imagine that their partner gave them the following response: “Thanks for listening. That was exactly what I needed to hear from you. I’m so glad that I called to tell you that.” Participants in the low instrumentality condition were asked to imagine that their partner gave them the following response: “Thanks for listening but that wasn’t really what I needed to hear from you. Maybe I shouldn’t have called to tell you that.” Participants in the no feedback condition were not given any information regarding their partner’s response to them. Finally, participants completed dependent measures and were asked to confirm whether they were truly in a romantic relationship.

4.1.3 Measures

Dependent measures are described in the order in which they were presented. See Appendix C for full materials.

4.1.3.1 Perceived Instrumentality

Participants completed six items ($\alpha = .98$) that assessed their perceived instrumentality toward their partner in the interaction (e.g., “To what extent do you think your response was

useful to your partner in achieving goals that were important to him/her in the conversation?"; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*).

4.1.3.2 Pleasantness of the Interaction

Participants completed 12 items ($\alpha = .96$) that assessed their feelings about the interaction they were asked to imagine (e.g., "To what extent was the conversation that you just imagined enjoyable?"; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*).

4.1.3.3 Feelings about Self

Participants completed 10 items ($\alpha = .84$) that assessed their feelings about themselves (e.g., "To what extent do you believe that you are a good support provider?"; "To what extent do you feel like you are a good partner?"; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*).

4.1.3.4 Perceived Partner Feelings about Relationship

Participants completed 12 items ($\alpha = .96$) that assessed their perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship (e.g., "To what extent does your partner value you right now?"; "How satisfied do you believe your partner is with your relationship right now?"; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*).

4.1.3.5 Motivation to be Instrumental in Future Support Interactions

Participants completed two items ($r[587] = .81, p < .001$) that assessed their motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions with their partner (e.g., "To what extent will you try to help your partner reach important goals that he/she has in future conversations?"; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*).

4.1.3.6 Feelings about Relationship

Participants completed 11 items ($\alpha = .95$) that assessed their current feelings about their relationship (e.g., “To what extent do you value your partner?”; “How satisfied are you with your relationship?”; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*).

4.1.3.7 Commonness of Instrumentality Feedback

Participants completed one item to assess how common it was for their partner to respond (i.e., to provide feedback regarding their instrumentality that was similar to the feedback or lack of feedback) similarly to the scenario they were asked to imagine (“How common is it that your partner would respond similarly to the conversation that you just imagined?”; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*).

4.2 Results

All analyses were two-way ANOVAs with disclosure valence condition and instrumentality feedback type as predictors. Planned comparisons were conducted to determine which conditions differed from one another. See Table 2 for full ANOVA results for dependent variables.

4.2.1 Manipulation Check

Before turning to my hypotheses, I first examined whether the instrumentality feedback manipulation affect perceived instrumentality as expected. The main effect of disclosure valence

condition was not significant, $F(1, 588) = .17, p = .681, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .001$. There was a significant main effect of instrumentality feedback type, $F(2, 588) = 1081.40, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .786$. Planned comparisons revealed that the instrumentality feedback type conditions differed as intended: Participants in the high instrumentality condition ($M = 6.32, SD = .64$) perceived that they were more instrumental than those in the no feedback condition ($M = 5.62, SD = .92$), who perceived that they were more instrumental than those in the low instrumentality condition ($M = 2.22, SD = 1.19; ps < .001$).

A significant Disclosure Valence Condition \times Instrumentality Feedback Type interaction also emerged, $F(2, 588) = 4.94, p = .007, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .017$ (see Figure 1). In both the negative, $F(2, 588) = 508.05, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .633$, and positive, $F(2, 588) = 580.94, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .664$, disclosure valence conditions, participants in the high instrumentality feedback condition perceived that they were more instrumental (negative; $M = 6.37, SD = .66$; positive; $M = 6.27, SD = .62$) than those in the no feedback condition (negative; $M = 5.43, SD = .87$; positive; $M = 5.80, SD = .94$), who perceived that they were more instrumental than those in the low instrumentality feedback condition (negative; $M = 2.31, SD = 1.15$; positive; $M = 2.13, SD = 1.22; ps < .001$). However, perceived instrumentality differed as function of disclosure valence condition within the no feedback condition such that no feedback elicited greater perceived instrumentality in the positive disclosure condition ($M = 5.80, SD = .94$) than the negative disclosure condition ($M = 5.43, SD = .87$), $F(1, 588) = 7.68, p = .006, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .013$. Perceived instrumentality did not differ as a function of disclosure valence condition within the high or low instrumentality feedback conditions ($Fs < 1.85$).

4.2.2 H2B

I first tested H2B—that listeners who received low instrumentality feedback in the negative disclosure condition would report that this type of feedback was a more common response of their partners in such disclosure contexts than participants who received low instrumentality feedback in the positive disclosure condition. There was a significant Disclosure Valence Condition \times Instrumentality Feedback Type interaction on commonness of instrumentality feedback, $F(2, 582) = 6.57, p = .002, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .022$ (see Figure 2). Supporting H2B, low instrumentality feedback was reported as being more common in the negative disclosure condition ($M = 3.05, SD = 1.84$) than in the positive disclosure condition ($M = 2.52, SD = 1.80$), $F(1, 582) = 5.95, p = .015, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .010$.ⁱⁱ

4.2.3 Exploratory Analyses Related to H2B

Although I did not have specific hypotheses about the following comparisons, I explored whether the inferences that listeners made after receiving no instrumentality feedback in the negative and positive disclosure conditions differed. Exploratory analyses revealed that no instrumentality feedback was reported as being more common in the positive ($M = 6.06, SD = 1.12$) versus negative disclosure condition ($M = 5.51, SD = 1.29$), $F(1, 582) = 6.25, p = .013, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .011$. Listeners who received no instrumentality feedback in the negative disclosure condition reported a less pleasant interaction ($F[1, 589] = 252.88, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .300$; negative; $M = 4.06, SD = .94$; positive; $M = 6.25, SD = .76$) and reported less positive perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship ($F[1, 588] = 5.62, p = .018, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .009$; negative; $M = 5.71, SD = .83$; positive; $M = 6.01, SD = .85$) than those in the positive

disclosure condition. Perceptions of the self, feelings about the relationship, and motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions did not differ by disclosure valence condition for listeners who received no instrumentality feedback ($F_s < 1.46$).

4.2.4 H3A

Next, I tested H3A by examining whether listeners who received low instrumentality feedback would report worse outcomes than those who received high instrumentality feedback. Supporting H3A, within the negative disclosure condition and compared to those who imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback, participants who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback reported a less pleasant interaction ($F[2, 589] = 136.76, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .317$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 2.61, SD = 1.04$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 4.84, SD = 1.08; p < .001$; see Figure 3), less positive perceptions of the self ($F[2, 586] = 19.53, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .062$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 4.43, SD = 1.10$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.28, SD = .86; p < .001$), less positive perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship ($F[2, 588] = 283.08, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .491$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 3.47, SD = 1.15$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.30, SD = .60; p < .001$; see Figure 4), less positive feelings about the relationship ($F[2, 588] = 11.59, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .038$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.48, SD = 1.36$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.22, SD = .82; p < .001$), and lower motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions ($F[2, 589] = 18.31, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .059$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.52, SD = 1.48$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.49, SD = .72; p < .001$).

Paralleling these findings and supporting H3A, within the positive disclosure condition and compared to those who imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback, participants who

imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback reported a less pleasant interaction ($F[2, 589] = 413.38, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .584$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 2.90, SD = 1.21$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.36, SD = .64; p < .001$), less positive perceptions of the self ($F[2, 586] = 33.16, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .102$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 4.33, SD = 1.24$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.46, SD = .96; p < .001$), less positive perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship ($F[2, 588] = 344.19, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .539$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 3.29, SD = 1.09$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.24, SD = .64; p < .001$), less positive feelings about the relationship ($F[2, 588] = 10.62, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .035$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.51, SD = 1.34$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.18, SD = .99; p < .001$), and lower motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions ($F[2, 589] = 24.61, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .077$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.41, SD = 1.78$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.45, SD = .70; p < .001$).

4.2.5 H3B

To test H3B, which posited that listener perceived instrumentality would mediate the effects of high instrumentality versus low instrumentality feedback on dependent variables, I ran a moderated mediation analysis using PROCESS (Model 8, Hayes & Preacher, 2013). This model allows for a test of moderated mediation in which the predictor variable predicts an outcome (with the possibility that this path is moderated) and a mediator (with the possibility that this path is also moderated), and a mediator predicts an outcome. Instrumentality feedback type was the predictor, disclosure valence condition was the moderator, and perceived instrumentality was the mediator. Because the predictor variable, instrumentality feedback type, was multi-categorical; it was dummy-coded into two predictor terms: one predictor consisting of

the low instrumentality/no feedback comparison and the other predictor consisting of the low instrumentality/high instrumentality comparison (see Hayes & Preacher, 2014, for details).

The pattern of results for the mediation analyses were consistent across all dependent variables. Supporting H3B, perceived instrumentality mediated the effects of instrumentality feedback type on all dependent variables in the negative and positive disclosure conditions when comparing the low instrumentality and high instrumentality feedback conditions (contrast 1; see Table 3 for indirect effects). In other words, listeners who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback perceived themselves as having been less instrumental than listeners who imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback and perceiving oneself as less instrumental was, in turn, associated with perceiving the interaction as less pleasant interaction and with reporting less positive feelings about the self, perceptions of perceived partner feelings about relationship, less positive feelings about the relationship, and lower motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions. This was true in both the positive and negative disclosure conditions.

4.2.6 Exploratory Analyses Related to H3B

In exploratory analyses, I examined whether listeners who imagined receiving no instrumentality feedback would report better or worse outcomes than those who imagined receiving high or low instrumentality feedback. This enabled me to determine whether receiving low instrumentality is costly or receiving high instrumentality is beneficial (or both) in comparison to receiving no instrumentality feedback. Within the negative disclosure condition, compared to those who imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback, listeners who imagined receiving no instrumentality feedback reported a less pleasant interaction (no

instrumentality feedback; $M = 4.06$, $SD = .94$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 4.84$, $SD = 1.08$; $p < .001$) and less positive perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.71$, $SD = .83$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.30$, $SD = .60$; $p < .001$). They did not differ in perceptions of the self (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.18$, $SD = .86$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.28$, $SD = .86$; $p = .503$), feelings about the relationship (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.01$, $SD = .96$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.22$, $SD = .82$; $p = .205$), or motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.20$, $SD = .92$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.49$, $SD = .72$; $p = .083$). Again within the negative disclosure condition, compared to those who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback, listeners who imagined receiving no instrumentality feedback reported a more positive interaction (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 4.06$, $SD = .94$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.04$; $p < .001$), more positive perceptions of the self (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.18$, $SD = .86$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.10$; $p < .001$), more positive perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.71$, $SD = .83$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.15$; $p < .001$), more positive feelings about the relationship (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.01$, $SD = .96$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.48$, $SD = 1.36$; $p = .001$), and greater motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.20$, $SD = .92$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.52$, $SD = 1.48$; $p < .001$). Thus, in comparison to receiving no instrumentality feedback following a partner's negative disclosure, receiving low instrumentality feedback is interpersonally costly for listeners and receiving high instrumentality feedback results in some benefits.

Within the positive disclosure condition, listeners who imagined receiving no instrumentality and high instrumentality feedback did not differ in pleasantness of the interaction (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.25$, $SD = .76$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.36$, $SD = .64$; $p = .416$), perceptions of the self (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.15$; high instrumentality feedback: $M = 5.46$, $SD = .96$; $p = .178$), perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.01$, $SD = .85$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.24$, $SD = .64$; $p = .067$), feelings about the relationship (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.08$, $SD = 1.10$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.18$, $SD = .99$; $p = .537$), or motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.37$, $SD = .95$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.45$, $SD = .70$; $p = .29$). Again within the positive disclosure condition, compared to listeners who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback, listeners who imagined receiving no instrumentality feedback reported a more pleasant interaction (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.25$, $SD = .76$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.21$; $p < .001$), more positive perceptions of the self (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.15$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.24$; $p < .001$), more positive perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.01$, $SD = .85$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.09$; $p < .001$), more positive feelings about the relationship (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.08$, $SD = 1.10$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.34$; $p < .001$), and greater motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions (no instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.37$, $SD = .95$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.78$; $p < .001$). Thus, in comparison to receiving no instrumentality feedback following a partner's positive disclosure, receiving low instrumentality

feedback is interpersonally costly for listeners and receiving high instrumentality feedback is equally beneficial.

I also explored whether perceived instrumentality would mediate the effects of low instrumentality versus no instrumentality feedback on dependent variables using the same moderated mediation model as above. The pattern of results for the mediation analyses was consistent across all dependent variables: Perceived instrumentality mediated the effects of instrumentality feedback type on all dependent variables in the negative and positive disclosure conditions when comparing the low instrumentality and no feedback conditions (contrast 2; see Table 3 for indirect effects). In other words, listeners who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback perceived themselves as having been less instrumental than listeners who imagined receiving no instrumentality feedback, and perceiving oneself as less instrumental was, in turn, associated with perceiving the interaction as less pleasant and with reporting less positive feelings about the self, perceptions of perceived partner feelings about relationship, and feelings about the relationship, and lower motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions. The index of moderated mediation indicated that the difference between the conditional indirect effects was significant when comparing the low instrumentality and no feedback conditions in the positive and negative disclosure conditions such that the effect was stronger in the positive disclosure condition.

Next, I explored whether listeners' outcomes would differ when they imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback in the negative versus positive disclosure conditions. Commonness of instrumentality feedback did not differ in the negative and positive disclosure conditions (negative; $M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.64$; positive; $M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.44$), $F(1, 582) = 1.45$, $p = .229$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .002$. Listeners who imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback in the

negative disclosure condition reported a less pleasant interaction ($F[1, 589] = 123.59, p < .001, partial \eta^2 = .173$; negative; $M = 4.84, SD = 1.08$; positive; $M = 6.36, SD = .64$) than those who received the same feedback in the positive disclosure condition. They did not differ in perceptions of the self ($F < 1.46$), perceived partner feelings about the relationship ($F < 2.12$), feelings about the relationship ($F < .19$), or motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions ($F < 1.08$).

Finally, I explored whether listeners' outcomes would differ when they imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback in the negative versus positive disclosure conditions. Listeners who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback in the negative disclosure condition reported a less pleasant interaction ($F[1, 589] = 4.51, p = .034, partial \eta^2 = .008$; $M = 2.61, SD = 1.04$; positive; $M = 2.90, SD = 1.21$) than those who received the same feedback in the positive disclosure condition. They did not differ in their perceptions of the self ($F < 1.46$), perceived partner feelings about the relationship ($F < 2.12$), feelings about the relationship ($F < .19$), or motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions ($F < 1.08$).

4.3 Discussion

In Study 3, I further investigated Aim 2 to determine whether it is particularly challenging for listeners to be instrumental in negative disclosure contexts. In support of H2B, participants who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback in the negative disclosure condition reported that this type of feedback was a more common response of their partners in such disclosure contexts than did participants who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback in the positive disclosure condition. This extends findings from Studies 1 and 2, which

showed that listeners who imagined or recalled a negative partner disclosure felt more uncertain about how to be instrumental compared to listeners who imagined a positive or neutral disclosure. The present findings suggest that uncertainty about how to be instrumental may translate into not being as instrumental in negative disclosure contexts. In addition, although in the negative disclosure condition participants reported that it was less common to receive explicit feedback suggesting low instrumentality than to receive high instrumentality or no instrumentality feedback, low instrumentality feedback was reported as more common in the negative versus positive disclosure context. Moreover, participants in the negative disclosure condition who received no instrumentality feedback perceived they were less instrumental than participants in the positive disclosure condition who received no instrumentality feedback. This suggests that participants may doubt how instrumental they are to their partner in negative disclosure contexts unless they receive explicit feedback indicating that they have been highly instrumental.

Study 3 also addressed Aim 3 by examining the role of listener perceived instrumentality in determining interpersonal consequences of listening to negative and positive disclosures from a romantic partner. In support of H3A, listeners who received low instrumentality feedback reported a less pleasant experience, less positive perceptions of the self, lower perceived partner feelings about the relationship, less positive feelings about the relationship, and lower motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions than listeners who received high instrumentality feedback in both the negative and positive disclosure conditions. In support of H3B, the effects of low versus high instrumentality feedback were mediated by listeners' perceived instrumentality in both the negative and positive disclosure conditions.

Although I did not advance hypotheses about the following comparisons, I was also interested in whether participants would differ in the pleasantness of the interaction or perceptions of the self, partner, and relationship when they received high instrumentality feedback in the negative versus positive disclosure conditions, as well as when they received low instrumentality feedback in the negative versus positive disclosure conditions. Listeners reported equally positive perceptions of the self, perceived partner feelings about relationship, motivation to be instrumental, and feelings about relationship when they received high instrumentality feedback in the negative disclosure condition compared to the positive disclosure condition. However, they did report a less pleasant interaction in the negative (versus positive) disclosure condition. Listeners who received low instrumentality feedback also reported equally negative perceptions of the self, perceived partner feelings about relationship, motivation to be instrumental, and feelings about relationship in the negative disclosure condition compared to the positive disclosure condition. However, listeners in the negative (versus positive) disclosure condition reported a less pleasant experience. This suggests that negative expressivity is not inherently harmful for relationships. Although negative disclosures are less pleasant to receive than positive disclosures, negative disclosures did not diminish feelings about the self, partner, or relationship unless they were paired with feedback that led listeners to doubt their own instrumentality. Specifically, when people felt instrumental, receiving a negative partner disclosure led to just as positive interpersonal outcomes for the listener as receiving a positive partner disclosure.

Study 3 also included a no instrumentality feedback condition, which enabled me to examine whether low or high instrumentality feedback was driving listeners' experiences and perceptions in both the negative and positive disclosure conditions. In the negative disclosure

condition, low instrumentality feedback resulted in less positive outcomes for the listener compared to no instrumentality feedback. Listeners' perceived instrumentality mediated these effects. High instrumentality feedback resulted in a more pleasant experience and less negative perceptions of one's partner's feelings about the relationship, but equally positive feelings about the self, motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions, and feelings about the relationship than no instrumentality feedback. In the positive disclosure condition, low instrumentality feedback always resulted in less positive outcomes for the listener compared to no instrumentality feedback, but the high instrumentality feedback condition did not differ from the no feedback condition. This pattern of results suggests that doubting one's instrumentality is relatively common in negative (versus positive) disclosure contexts and that low feelings of instrumentality may be driving the negative effects of a partner's negative disclosures on listener's outcomes.

5.0 Study 4

In Study 3, I compared listeners' perceived instrumentality in a negative disclosure context to instrumentality in a positive disclosure context to address Aim 3. The findings suggested that negative expressivity may not be so detrimental to relationships when listeners are able to feel instrumental, but that when listeners do not feel instrumental, they consistently experience negative outcomes. Next, to determine whether and when negative expressivity is beneficial or costly for relationships, I compared listeners' instrumentality in negative disclosure contexts to a no disclosure control condition. Including a no disclosure control condition enabled me to examine whether listening to a negative partner disclosure leads to intrapersonal and interpersonal costs for the listener by comparing listeners' outcomes in a negative disclosure/low or high instrumentality feedback condition to a condition in which the listener did not receive any disclosure at all. By including this no disclosure control condition, I was also able to examine whether listening to a negative partner disclosure could boost intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes for the listener when the listener felt instrumental.

In Study 4, I used a four condition design, in which participants either imagined receiving a scripted negative disclosure from their partner and then imagined that they received either high, low, or no instrumentality feedback; or participants were not asked to imagine any disclosure, did not receive any instrumentality feedback, and simply moved on to the dependent measures. This latter condition was the no disclosure control condition. I sought to replicate the effects from Study 3 regarding H3A and H3B (this time focusing only on a negative disclosure context or a no disclosure context; no positive disclosure condition was included in Study 4). I further examined whether listeners who received low instrumentality feedback in response to a negative

disclosure would report a less pleasant interaction, less positive perceptions of the self, less positive perceived partner feelings about the relationship, less positive feelings about the relationship, and lower motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions than participants in a no disclosure control condition (H3C). Study 4 also tested the hypothesis that listeners who received high instrumentality feedback in response to a negative disclosure would report a more (or at least not less) pleasant interaction, more positive perceptions of the self, more positive perceived partner feelings about relationship, more positive feelings about the relationship, and greater motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions than participants in a no disclosure control condition (H3D). Furthermore, I hypothesized that these effects (H3C and H3D) would be mediated by listener perceived instrumentality (H3E).

5.1 Method

5.1.1 Participants

Based on instrumentality feedback effects in Study 3, I ran a power analysis using Gpower (Faul et al., 2007) to determine the sample size for Study 4. Using the SESOI method (smallest effect size of interest; Lakens, 2014), power analyses revealed that Study 4 required 208 participants to find the effect of instrumentality feedback condition based on the three cell design from Study 3 with .80 power. Because I planned to add a no disclosure control condition, I posted 250 timeslots on Prolific to recruit romantically-involved individuals for an online study on how people interact with their romantic partners. People who had participated in the prior studies described above were not eligible to participate. Participants received \$1.00. We

collected data from 267 participants. Data from two participants who reported that they were not actually in a relationship were removed before data analysis began. An additional six participants did not complete any of the dependent measures. Thus, data from 259 participants who met our criteria could be included in analyses (157 female; 101 male; 1 other; $M_{\text{age}} = 34.20$, $SD = 10.69$; $M_{\text{relationship length}} = 131.91$ months, $SD = 563.88$).

5.1.2 Measures and Procedure

Participants read a consent script, completed demographic and individual difference measures, and were randomly assigned to a condition (*ns* per condition: 65 high instrumentality feedback, 64 no instrumentality feedback, 65 low instrumentality feedback, 65 no disclosure control). Paralleling Study 3, participants were asked to imagine that their romantic partner called them on the phone during their lunch time. Participants in the no disclosure control condition were not given any further instructions before proceeding to dependent measures. Participants in the other three conditions were asked to imagine that their partner had said: “I’m really upset. I made a big mistake at work and now I’m really nervous that I could get in a lot of trouble for it.” Participants were asked to imagine that they respond to their partner, “with the best intentions.” Participants then received feedback regarding their level of instrumentality using the manipulation from Study 3 (i.e., high, low, or no instrumentality feedback).

Next, all participants completed dependent measures that were identical to those in Study 3: perceived instrumentality (six items; $\alpha = .97$), pleasantness of the interaction (12 items; $\alpha = .93$), feelings about self (10 items; $\alpha = .85$), perceived partner feelings about relationship (12 items; $\alpha = .93$), motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions (two items; $r[256] = .76$, $p < .001$), and feelings about relationship (11 items; $\alpha = .94$). Finally, participants answered

open-ended questions about what cues indicate high or low instrumentality in their real-life interactions with their romantic partner, and were asked to confirm whether they were truly in a romantic relationship. See Appendix D for full materials for Study 4.

5.2 Results

All analyses were one-way ANOVAs with condition as the predictor. Planned comparisons were conducted to determine which of the four conditions (high instrumentality feedback; low instrumentality feedback; no instrumentality feedback; no disclosure control condition) differed from one another.

5.2.1 Manipulation Check

Before turning to hypotheses, I first examined whether the instrumentality manipulation affected perceived instrumentality as expected. The ANOVA revealed a significant effect of condition, $F(3, 254) = 148.41$, $p < .001$, $partial \eta^2 = .637$. Conditions differed in perceived instrumentality as intended: Participants in the high instrumentality feedback condition ($M = 6.23$, $SD = .64$) perceived that they were more instrumental than those in the no disclosure control condition ($M = 5.46$, $SD = 1.24$; $p < .001$) and participants in the low instrumentality condition ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 1.49$) perceived that they were less instrumental than those in the no disclosure control condition, as well as the high instrumentality and no instrumentality feedback conditions ($M = 5.56$, $SD = .67$; $ps < .001$). The no feedback condition resulted in less perceived

instrumentality than the high instrumentality feedback condition ($p < .001$), but did not differ from the no disclosure control condition ($p = .613$).

5.2.2 H3A

In support of H3A, compared to listeners who imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback, listeners who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback reported a less pleasant interaction ($F[3, 255] = 70.04, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .452$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 2.92, SD = 1.01$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.02, SD = .95; p < .001$), less positive perceptions of the self ($F[3, 253] = 6.09, p = .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .067$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 4.58, SD = 1.31$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.37, SD = 5.03; p < .001$), less positive perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship ($F[3, 254] = 73.07, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .463$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 3.93, SD = 1.15$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.10, SD = .65; p < .001$), less positive feelings about the relationship ($F[3, 254] = 3.81, p = .011, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .043$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.61, SD = 1.19$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.13, SD = 1.03; p = .006$), and lower motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions ($F[3, 255] = 5.27, p = .002, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .058$; low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.75, SD = 1.26$; high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.37, SD = .80; p = .001$).

5.2.3 H3B

To test H3B, which posits that the effects of high versus low instrumentality feedback would be mediated by perceived instrumentality, I ran a mediation model using PROCESS

(Model 4, Hayes & Preacher, 2013). Condition was the predictor and perceived instrumentality was the mediator. Because the predictor variable, condition, was multi-categorical, it was dummy-coded into three predictor terms which compared all conditions against the low instrumentality feedback condition (see Hayes & Preacher, 2014, for details).

The pattern of results for the mediation analyses were consistent across all dependent variables. Supporting H3B, perceived instrumentality mediated the effects of condition when comparing the low instrumentality feedback and high instrumentality feedback conditions (contrast 3; see Table 4) on all dependent variables. Perceived instrumentality also mediated the effects of condition when comparing the low instrumentality feedback condition to the control condition (contrast 1) and no instrumentality feedback condition (contrast 2) on all dependent variables. In other words, listeners who received low instrumentality feedback perceived themselves as less instrumental than participants in the high instrumentality feedback, no instrumentality feedback, and control conditions, and these reduced perceptions of instrumentality were, in turn, associated with perceiving a less pleasant interaction and reporting less positive feelings about the self, partner, and relationship.

5.2.4 H3C

In support of H3C, compared to participants in the no disclosure control condition, participants in the low instrumentality condition reported a less pleasant interaction (low instrumentality feedback; $M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.01$; control condition; $M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.33$; $p < .001$), less positive perceptions of the self (low instrumentality feedback; $M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.31$; control condition; $M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.18$; $p = .018$), less positive perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship (low instrumentality feedback; $M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.15$; control

condition; $M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.04$; $p < .001$), less positive feelings about the relationship (low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.61$, $SD = 1.19$; control condition; $M = 6.07$, $SD = 1.06$; $p = .014$), and lower motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions (low instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.75$, $SD = 1.26$; control condition; $M = 6.31$, $SD = .98$; $p = .002$).

5.2.5 H3D

Contrary to H3D, participants in the high instrumentality condition ($M = 5.02$, $SD = .95$) reported a less pleasant interaction ($M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.33$; $p = .026$) than those in the no disclosure control condition. However, in support of H3D, participants in the high instrumentality condition reported an equally positive perception of the self (high instrumentality feedback; $M = 5.37$, $SD = 5.03$; control condition; $M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.18$; $p = .076$), more positive perceptions of their partner's feelings about the relationship (high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.10$, $SD = .65$; control condition; $M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.04$; $p < .001$), equally positive feelings about the relationship (high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.13$, $SD = 1.03$; control condition; $M = 6.07$, $SD = 1.06$; $p = .753$), and equally high motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions (high instrumentality feedback; $M = 6.37$, $SD = .80$; control condition; $M = 6.31$, $SD = .98$; $p = .728$).

5.2.6 H3E

To test H3E, which posits that the effects of high and low instrumentality feedback versus the no disclosure control condition would be mediated by perceived instrumentality, I ran a mediation analysis using PROCESS (Model 4, Hayes & Preacher, 2013). Condition was the

predictor and perceived instrumentality was the mediator. Because the predictor variable, condition, was multi-categorical, it was dummy-coded into three predictor terms which compared each level of instrumentality feedback against the no disclosure control condition (see Hayes & Preacher, 2014, for details).

The pattern of results for the mediation analyses were consistent across all dependent variables. Supporting H3E, perceived instrumentality mediated the effects of condition when comparing the high instrumentality feedback and no disclosure control conditions (contrast 1; see Table 5) and when comparing the low instrumentality feedback and no disclosure control conditions (contrast 2) on all dependent variables, but not when comparing the no feedback and no disclosure control conditions (contrast 3). In other words, listeners who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback perceived themselves as less instrumental than participants in the no disclosure control condition, and these reduced perceptions of instrumentality were, in turn, associated with perceiving a less pleasant interaction and reporting less positive feelings about the self, partner, and relationship. Listeners who imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback perceived themselves as more instrumental than participants in the no disclosure control condition, and this increased instrumentality was, in turn, associated with perceiving a more pleasant interaction and reporting more positive feelings about the self, partner, and relationship.

5.2.7 Exploratory Analyses Related to H3E

Exploratory analyses revealed that the no feedback condition resulted in a less pleasant experience than the high instrumentality feedback and no disclosure control conditions ($ps < .001$), but a more pleasant experience than those in the low instrumentality feedback condition (p

< .001). The pattern of results was consistent across all other dependent variables (see Table 6 for means and statistics). The no feedback condition did not differ from the high instrumentality or no disclosure condition conditions, but did lead to more positive perceptions of the self, perceived partner feelings about the relationship, feelings about the relationship, and greater motivation to be instrumental in future support interactions than the low instrumentality feedback condition ($ps > .20$).

5.3 Discussion

In Study 4, I sought to replicate the effects observed in Study 3 and further address Aim 3. I investigated how receiving feedback that suggests the listener has been instrumental (or non-instrumental) in a negative disclosure context affects the listener's personal and interpersonal outcomes in comparison to a condition in which the listener does not receive any disclosure (or any feedback about their instrumentality). Replicating the results from Study 3 and supporting H3A, listeners who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback in response a partner's negative disclosure reported a less pleasant interaction and reported interpersonal costs (e.g., less positive feelings about the relationship) compared to those who imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback in the same negative disclosure context. In support of H3C, listeners who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback also reported a less pleasant interaction and less positive perceptions of the self, partner, and relationship than participants in the no disclosure control condition. This suggests, as hypothesized, that listening to a partner's negative disclosure and learning that one has not been instrumental to the partner's goals is more aversive than not listening to a partner's negative disclosure in the first place. In support of H3D, listeners

who imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback reported equally positive outcomes, and even higher perceived partner feelings about the relationship, than participants in the no disclosure control condition, but did report a less pleasant interaction. Furthermore, supporting H3E, the effects of high and low instrumentality feedback versus the no disclosure control condition were mediated by listeners' perceived instrumentality.

Taken together, these results suggest that listening to a negative partner disclosure leads to consistently poor outcomes when listeners perceive that they have not been instrumental, compared to when they feel highly instrumental, and compared to when they do not receive a negative disclosure from their partner at all. Importantly, listening to a negative partner disclosure appears to lead to equally positive feelings about self, motivation to be instrumental, and feelings about one's relationship and may even lead to a boost in relational outcomes when listeners perceive they have been instrumental compared to when they do not receive a negative disclosure. Specifically, listeners who perceived that they had been instrumental in response to a partner's negative disclosure perceived that their partner was more satisfied with their relationship than participants who did not receive a negative disclosure.

6.0 Study 5

In Study 5, I sought to build on the evidence in Studies 3-4 regarding the ways in which negative expressivity and listener instrumentality combine to shape listener outcomes. I further addressed Aim 3, which involved examining the role of listener perceived instrumentality in determining interpersonal consequences of receiving negative disclosures from a romantic partner. I also addressed Aim 4 by examining whether listeners' perceived instrumentality moderates the effects of the discloser's chronic and situational negative expressivity on listeners' outcomes in romantic couples' interactions. To do so, I examined how a listener's naturally occurring perceptions of their own instrumentality (in response to a partner's disclosure in an actual face-to-face negative disclosure interaction) was associated with relational outcomes assessed immediately after the interaction. Study 5 also expanded the type of negative expressivity examined, by examining interactions in which the discloser expressed about their greatest fear. Furthermore, I extended the previous studies by examining the effects of chronic negative expressivity from a partner—how frequently the partner typically expresses a variety of negatively-valenced thoughts and feelings—and chronic feelings of perceived instrumentality—the typical level of the listener's perceived instrumentality in response to the discloser—on the listener's relational outcomes. I examined listeners' outcomes both immediately after a negatively-valenced interaction with their partner and over the course of the following year.

Relevant to Aim 3—assessing the role of listener perceived instrumentality in determining interpersonal outcomes of listening to negative disclosures from a romantic partner—I hypothesized that listeners who reported low perceived instrumentality, measured after a face-to-face discussion in which their romantic partner discloses about their greatest fear,

would report lower post-interaction relationship quality and closeness (controlling for pre-interaction levels of these variables) and greater frustration than listeners who reported high perceived instrumentality (H3F). I also hypothesized that people who reported chronically low perceived instrumentality towards their partner when their partner turns to them for support would report lower relationship quality, closeness, and perceived partner regard than people who reported chronically high perceived instrumentality—both concurrently (H3G) and one year later (for relationship quality and closeness variables; H3H).

Study 5 addressed Aim 4 by examining whether listener perceived instrumentality moderates the effects of the discloser's chronic and situational negative expressivity on listener's outcomes in romantic couples' interactions. I hypothesized that listener perceived *situational* instrumentality would moderate the effects of listener's perceived partner *situational* negative expressivity on listener's relationship quality, closeness, and frustration after a face-to-face interaction with their partner (H4A): Listeners who perceived their partner as having expressed high levels of situational negativity would report more negative interpersonal outcomes than listeners who perceived their partner as having expressed low levels of situational negativity, but only when they perceived themselves as having been low in perceived situational instrumentality. Listeners who reported lower perceived instrumentality would report more negative interpersonal outcomes than listeners who reported greater perceived instrumentality, especially when listeners perceived greater (vs. less) partner situational negative expressivity.

I also hypothesized that listener *chronic* perceived instrumentality would moderate the effects of listener's perceived *chronic* negative expressivity from the partner (assessed as perceptions of one's partner's negativity baseline) on listener's relationship quality, closeness, and perceived partner regard (H4B): Listeners who perceived their partners as having a high

negativity baseline, and thus expressing a great deal of negativity, would report more negative relational outcomes than listeners who perceived their partners as having a low negativity baseline, but only when they reported chronically low perceived instrumentality. Listeners who reported chronically low perceived instrumentality would report more negative interpersonal outcomes than listeners who reported chronically high perceived instrumentality, especially when the partner is perceived as having a high (vs. low) negativity baseline. After analyzing the data from Studies 1-4, and prior to analyzing the data from Study 5, I pre-registered my hypotheses and data analytic plan (<https://osf.io/48t5n>).

6.1 Method

6.1.1 Participants

Two hundred and six participants (103 romantic couples; 95 male; 109 female; 1 other; M age = 36.20 years, SD = 17.07; M relationship length = 122.13 months, SD = 163.10; 93 heterosexual couples; 8 homosexual couples; 2 unknown) were recruited through flyers posted on a large American university's campus and in the surrounding Pittsburgh community, via advertisements placed in local newspaper and/or on Craigslist, the Pitt+ME registry, and Department of Psychology subject pool to participate in a study examining communication processes in romantic couples. Sample size was determined by grant budget constraints. To be eligible to participate, participants were required to be 18 years or older, to have been in an exclusive romantic relationship for at least 6 months, and both couple members must have been willing to participate in the lab session. Each participant received \$25.00 for their participation in

a 90-120 minute lab session and were reimbursed up to \$6.00 for travel (per couple). Participants also received \$5.00 for completion of an online follow-up survey a year after the lab session.

6.1.2 Procedure

Romantic couples came to the lab, were greeted by a male research assistant, and completed informed consent documents. Couple members were separated, and each person completed a series of background measures. Both partners were assured that their partner would not have access to their responses.

Couples members were then reunited in a living room-style video interaction lab. Couples completed a warm-up Pictionary task to get comfortable with the lab setting and with being audio and video recorded. After being separated to complete some pre-interaction measures, couples completed a 7-minute videotaped interaction task together. One couple member was randomly assigned to the “Discloser” role, and the other couple member was assigned to the “Listener” role. During the interaction, each Discloser talked about their greatest fear (see Appendix E for full instructions). Examples of fears that Disclosers described included spiders, heights, failing in their career, facing or having loved ones face severe health issues. Listeners were instructed to respond naturally. These interactions were videotaped, but because my predictions in the present investigation relate to listener perceptions of their own instrumentality, the focal measures involve listener perceptions. Couple members were then separated and each completed a series of post-interaction measures before being thanked, debriefed, and compensated.

One year after completion of the lab session, participants were contacted by email or phone and were asked to complete an online follow-up survey.

6.1.3 Measures

Only measures relevant to the hypotheses being tested in this manuscript are described here (see Appendix E for full materials). Measures are listed in the order in which they were administered.

6.1.3.1 Self-Reported Relationship Quality

Participants completed the six-item Perceived Relationship Quality Components Scale (PRQC; e.g., “How satisfied are you with your relationship?”; Fletcher et al., 2000; 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely*) to assess their perceived relationship quality. This six-item measure included one item tapping each of the six subcomponents of relationship quality (satisfaction, commitment, trust, love, passion, and closeness). Participants completed the PRQC once before the in-lab interaction (pre-interaction; $\alpha = .83$), once after the interaction (post-interaction; $\alpha = .85$), and in the one year follow-up survey (Time 2; $\alpha = .86$).

6.1.3.2 Closeness

Participants completed the Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) scale (Aron et al., 1992), which measures an individual’s sense of closeness with their partner (Agnew et al., 1998). Participants were asked to choose from an array of overlapping circles which pair of circles best represents themselves and their partner. Response options ranged from *two completely separate circles* (1) to *two circles that almost completely overlap* (7). Participants completed the IOS scale once before the interaction (pre-interaction), once after the interaction (post-interaction), and in the one year follow-up survey (Time 2).

6.1.3.3 Perceived Partner Regard

Participants completed 10 items (adapted from Murray et al., 2009; Rempel & Holmes, 1986; Rempel et al., 1985) to assess their perceived partner regard (e.g., “My partner regards me as very important in his/her life”; 1 = *Not at All True*; 7 = *Very True*). Participants completed the scale once before the interaction (pre-interaction; $\alpha = .90$).

6.1.3.4 Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline

Participants completed the 14-item Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline scale (Forest et al., 2014; e.g., “My partner expresses a great deal of negativity;” 1 = *Very Strongly Disagree*; 9 = *Very Strongly Agree*) to assess how frequently they perceive their partners to express negativity. Participants completed the scale once before the interaction (pre-interaction; $\alpha = .92$).

6.1.3.5 Chronic Perceived Instrumentality in Support Contexts

Participants completed an adapted version of the 9-item Basic Need Satisfaction in Relationships scale (La Guardia et al., 2000). The competence subscale (3 items; e.g., “When my partner turns to me for support about something that is upsetting or bother him/her... I feel very capable and effective”; 1 = *Not at All True*; 7 = *Completely True*), assessed participants’ chronic feelings of perceived instrumentality when their partners come to them for support. Participants completed the scale once before the interaction (pre-interaction; $\alpha = .72$).

6.1.3.6 Listener’s Perceived Situational Instrumentality

Listeners completed four items ($\alpha = .84$) assessing their perceptions of their own instrumentality during the face-to-face interaction in which their partner disclosed about their greatest fear (e.g., “I was able to meet my partner’s needs;” 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Completely True*).

6.1.3.7 Listener's Perceived Partner Situational Negativity

Listeners completed four items ($\alpha = .68$) assessing how much negativity their partner expressed during the face-to-face interaction (e.g., “To what extent did you partner do each of the following during your discussion with your partner?: Express fear;” 1 = *Not at All*; 7 = *Extremely/Very Frequently*).

6.1.3.8 Frustration

Listeners completed a one-item measure of their frustration after the interaction with their partner (“I felt frustrated with how the conversation went;” 1 = *Not at All True*; 7 = *Completely True*).

6.2 Results

Data from one participant who had difficulty remaining alert throughout the lab session were excluded from analyses.

6.2.1 H3F

Study 5 first addressed Aim 3 to examine the role of listener perceived instrumentality in determining the interpersonal consequences of receiving negative disclosures from a romantic partner. To address this aim, I tested H3F—that listeners who reported low perceived instrumentality, measured after a face-to-face discussion in which their romantic partner discloses about their greatest fear, would report lower post-interaction relationship quality and

closeness (controlling for pre-interaction levels of these variables) and greater frustration than listeners who reported high perceived instrumentality.

Although data were collected from couples in Study 5, participants were assigned to one of two roles (i.e. Discloser; Listener) for the face-to-face interaction. All measures relevant to H3F are reported only by only one member per dyad—the listener—so dyadic data analyses are not appropriate. I tested H3F using linear regression in the R software package (R Development Core Team, 2008). Listeners' perceived situational instrumentality was grand mean-centered to ease interpretation of regression coefficients (Cohen et al., 2003). To test H3F, I regressed each dependent variable (separately) on to listeners' perceived situational instrumentality in the face-to-face interaction and included pre-interaction levels of the post-interaction outcomes if applicable. As predicted, listener perceived situational instrumentality positively predicted both post-interaction relationship quality (while controlling for pre-interaction relationship quality; $\beta = .14$, $SE = .04$, 95% $CI = [.07, .20]$, $p < .001$) and post-interaction closeness (while controlling for pre-interaction closeness; $\beta = .24$, $SE = .06$, 95% $CI = [.11, .36]$, $p < .001$), and negatively predicted post-interaction frustration ($\beta = -.65$, $SE = .12$, 95% $CI = [-.89, -.40]$, $p < .001$). Pre-interaction relationship quality predicted post-interaction relationship quality ($\beta = .73$, $SE = .06$, 95% $CI = [.62, .84]$, $p < .001$) and pre-interaction closeness prediction post-interaction closeness ($\beta = .76$, $SE = .05$, 95% $CI = [.66, .86]$, $p < .001$). These findings reveal that listeners who experienced low instrumentality when their romantic partner disclosed to them about a negative topic reported lower relationship quality and less closeness with their partner (controlling for pre-interaction levels of these variables) and greater frustration after the interaction than listeners who experienced higher situational instrumentality.

6.2.2 H3G

Next, I tested H3G—that participants who reported low *chronic* instrumentality—that is, participants who typically experience low instrumentality when their partner comes to them for support—would report lower relationship quality, closeness, and perceived partner regard than people who reported high chronic instrumentality (when assessed concurrently). Because these measures are not specific to the Listener or Discloser role within the lab interaction, both members of each couple completed measures relevant to H3G. I was interested in how each individual’s perceptions of their own chronic perceived instrumentality when their partner comes to them for support predicts their relational outcomes. However, couple members’ reports may be correlated. Thus, I used an individual-level model using the R software package (R Development Core Team, 2008) and Lme4 package (Bates et al., 2015), which account for the nested nature of the dyadic data. This approach allowed me to include data from both members of each couple in my analyses examining effects of chronic measures, while accounting for the non-random relationship between couple members.

To test H3G, I assessed the effect of participants’ chronic perceived instrumentality on the participant’s own pre-interaction relationship-quality, pre-interaction closeness, and perceived partner regard, separately. Couple ID was included in the model as a random intercept to account for non-independence and chronic perceived instrumentality was grand mean-centered. As predicted, chronic perceived instrumentality positively predicted pre-interaction relationship quality ($\beta = .20$, $SE = .04$, 95% $CI = [.12, .29]$, $p < .001$), pre-interaction closeness ($\beta = .20$, $SE = .09$, 95% $CI = [.02, .38]$, $p = .026$), and perceived partner regard ($\beta = .30$, $SE = .05$, 95% $CI = [.21, .40]$, $p < .001$). Thus, in support of H3G, listeners who reported chronically low instrumentality in interactions when their partner comes to them for support reported lower

relationship quality, less closeness, and lower perceived partner regard than those who reported chronically high instrumentality in such interactions.

6.2.3 H3H

Next, I examined H3H—that participants who reported chronically low instrumentality towards their partner when their partner comes to them for support would report lower relationship quality and closeness one year after the lab session (controlling for initial levels of these variables) compared to people who reported chronically high instrumentality. I assessed the effect of chronic perceived instrumentality on Time 2 relationship quality and Time 2 closeness, while controlling for pre-interaction measures of relationship quality and closeness, using the same individual-level model with a random intercept as described for the test of H3G. H3H was not supported: Chronic perceived instrumentality did not predict Time 2 relationship quality (controlling for pre-interaction relationship quality; $\beta = -.07$, $SE = .06$, 95% $CI = [-.20, .05]$, $p = .248$) or Time 2 closeness (controlling for pre-interaction closeness; $\beta = -.13$, $SE = .12$, 95% $CI = [-.36, .10]$, $p = .276$). Pre-interaction relationship quality ($\beta = .85$, $SE = .12$, 95% $CI = [.60, 1.09]$, $p < .001$) predicted Time 2 relationship quality and pre-interaction closeness predicted Time 2 closeness ($\beta = .40$, $SE = .10$, 95% $CI = [.21, .60]$, $p < .001$). Possible explanations for the lack of longitudinal effects are considered in the Discussion.

6.2.4 H4A

Study 5 also addressed Aim 4 of this project by examining whether listener perceived instrumentality moderates the effects of the discloser's chronic and situational negative

expressivity on listeners' outcomes in romantic couples' interactions. I first tested H4A to determine whether listener perceived *situational* instrumentality would moderate the effects of listener's perception of the partner's *situational* negativity on listener's relationship quality, closeness, and frustration after a face-to-face interaction with the partner. Because H4A involves data provided by only one member of each couple (the Listener), I used multiple linear regression in the R software package (R Development Core Team, 2008). All predictors were grand mean-centered. I assessed the effects of listeners' perceived partner situational negativity, listeners' perceived situational instrumentality, and the Perceived Partner Situational Negativity \times Perceived Listener Situational Instrumentality interaction on each dependent variable separately. If the interaction term was significant, I used the jtools (Long, 2018) package to analyze simple slopes and determine whether the pattern of results matched my predictions.

First, I examined post-interaction relationship quality as the dependent variable and controlled for pre-interaction relationship quality. Pre-interaction relationship quality significantly predicted post-interaction relationship quality ($\beta = .73$, $SE = .05$, 95% $CI = [.63, .84]$, $p < .001$). The main effect of listener perceived situational negativity was not significant ($\beta = -.05$, $SE = .03$, 95% $CI = [-.10, .01]$, $p = .094$). The main effect of listener perceived situational instrumentality was significant ($\beta = .14$, $SE = .03$, 95% $CI = [.07, .20]$, $p < .001$), such that listeners who reported greater instrumentality reported greater post-interaction relationship quality (controlling for pre-interaction relationship quality). However, this was qualified by a significant Perceived Partner Situational Negativity \times Perceived Listener Situational Instrumentality interaction ($\beta = .05$, $SE = .02$, 95% $CI = [.01, .09]$, $p = .016$; see Table 9 for full results; see Figure 5). In support of predictions, simple slopes analyses revealed that listeners who perceived high situational partner negativity reported lower relationship quality than those

who reported low perceived partner negativity when they also reported low situational instrumentality ($\beta = -.10$, $SE = .03$, $p < .001$), but not when they reported high situational instrumentality ($\beta = .01$, $SE = .04$, $p = .80$). Also in support of predictions, listeners who reported low situational instrumentality reported lower relationship quality than those who reported greater situational instrumentality particularly when perceiving high situational negativity ($\beta = .20$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$), and marginally so when perceiving low situational negativity ($\beta = .08$, $SE = .04$, $p = .06$).

Next, I examined H4A with post-interaction closeness as the dependent variable and controlled for pre-interaction closeness. Pre-interaction closeness significantly predicted post-interaction closeness ($\beta = .76$, $SE = .05$, 95% CI = [.65, .86], $p < .001$). The main effect of listener perceived situational instrumentality was not significant ($\beta = -.07$, $SE = .06$, 95% CI = [-.19, .04], $p = .209$). The main effect of listener perceived situational instrumentality was significant ($\beta = .24$, $SE = .06$, 95% CI = [.11, .36], $p < .001$) such that listeners who reported greater instrumentality reported greater post-interaction closeness (controlling for pre-interaction closeness). Contrary to predictions, the Perceived Partner Situational Negativity \times Perceived Listener Situational Instrumentality interaction was not significant ($\beta = -.01$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI = [-.10, .06], $p = .686$).

Finally, I examined H4A with post-interaction frustration as the dependent variable. The main effect of listener perceived situational negativity was significant ($\beta = .28$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI = [.05, .51], $p = .016$) such that people who perceived that their partner expressed greater situational negativity when discussing their greatest fear reported more frustration with the interaction. The main effect of listener perceived situational instrumentality was also significant ($\beta = -.65$, $SE = .12$, 95% CI = [-.89, -.41], $p < .001$) such that people who reported greater

feelings of instrumentality in the situation reported less frustration with in the interaction. Contrary to predictions, the Perceived Partner Situational Negativity \times Perceived Listener Situational Instrumentality interaction was not significant ($\beta = -.05$, $SE = .08$, 95% $CI = [-.11, .22]$, $p = .527$).

6.2.5 H4B

Next, I tested H4B—that participant *chronic* perceived instrumentality would moderate the effects of *chronic* negative expressivity from the partner (assessed as perceptions of the partner’s negativity baseline) on participants’ relationship quality, closeness, and perceived partner regard. Because the chronic measures were completed by both members of each couple (as described above), I used individual-level models accounting for non-independence using the R software package (R Development Core Team, 2008). I assessed the effects of perceived partner negativity baseline, chronic perceived instrumentality, and the Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline \times Chronic Perceived Instrumentality interaction on pre-interaction relationship quality, pre-interaction closeness, and perceived partner regard, separately. All predictors were grand mean-centered and Couple ID was included as a random intercept to account for non-independence.

First, I examined H4B with pre-interaction relationship quality as the dependent variable. The main effect of perceived partner negativity baseline was significant ($\beta = -.13$, $SE = .03$, 95% $CI = [-.19, -.07]$, $p < .001$) such that people who perceived that their partner had a higher negativity baseline (and thus express greater negativity) reported lower relationship quality. The main effect of chronic perceived instrumentality was also significant ($\beta = .11$, $SE = .05$, 95% $CI = [.02, .21]$, $p = .024$) such that people who perceived themselves typically highly instrumental

when their partner sought support reported greater relationship quality. Contrary to predictions, the Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline \times Chronic Perceived Instrumentality interaction was not significant ($\beta = .04$, $SE = .02$, 95% $CI = [-.01, .08]$, $p = .113$).

Next, I examined H4B with pre-interaction closeness as the dependent variable. Neither the main effect of perceived partner negativity baseline ($\beta = -.10$, $SE = .06$, 95% $CI = [-.22, .02]$, $p = .114$) nor chronic perceived instrumentality ($\beta = .07$, $SE = .10$, 95% $CI = [-.13, .27]$, $p = .485$) was significant. However, there was a significant Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline \times Chronic Perceived Instrumentality interaction ($\beta = .09$, $SE = .05$, 95% $CI = [.06, .18]$, $p = .045$; see Figure 6). In support of predictions, simple slope analyses revealed that listeners who perceived their partner as chronically expressing a high amount of negativity reported less closeness with their partner than those who perceived their partner as expressing low amounts of negativity when they also reported chronically low instrumentality when their partner comes to them for support ($\beta = -.20$, $SE = .08$, $p = .01$), but not when they reported chronically high instrumentality ($\beta = .00$, $SE = .08$, $p = .96$). Listeners who reported chronically low levels of instrumentality when their partner came to them for support reported less closeness with their partner than those who reported chronically high levels of instrumentality when they also perceived their partner as having a high negativity baseline ($\beta = .23$, $SE = .10$, $p = .03$), but not when they perceived their partner as having a low negativity baseline ($\beta = -.09$, $SE = .15$, $p = .55$).

Finally, I examined H4B with pre-interaction perceived partner regard as the dependent variable. There was a significant main effect of perceived partner negativity baseline ($\beta = -.13$, $SE = .03$, 95% $CI = [-.20, -.07]$, $p < .001$) such that listeners who perceived their partners as having higher negativity baselines reported lower perceived partner regard. There was also a

significant main effect of listener chronic perceived instrumentality ($\beta = .18$, $SE = .05$, 95% $CI = [.07, .28]$, $p < .001$) such that listeners who reported higher chronic instrumentality reported greater perceived partner regard. However, this was qualified by a significant interaction ($\beta = .06$, $SE = .02$, 95% $CI = [.02, .11]$, $p = .008$; see Figure 7). Simple slope analyses revealed that listeners who perceived their partner as chronically expressing a high amount of negativity reported lower perceived partner regard than those who perceived their partner as expressing low amounts of negativity when they also reported chronically low instrumentality when their partner comes to them for support ($\beta = -.20$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$), but not when they reported chronically high instrumentality ($\beta = -.06$, $SE = .04$, $p = .14$). Listeners who reported chronically low levels of instrumentality when their partner came to them for support reported lower perceived partner regard than those who reported chronically high levels of instrumentality when they also perceived their partner as having a high negativity baseline ($\beta = .29$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$), but not when they perceived their partner as having a low negativity baseline ($\beta = .07$, $SE = .08$, $p = .38$).

6.3 Discussion

In Study 5, I sought to further address Aim 3 by assessing the role of listener perceived instrumentality in predicting interpersonal outcomes of listening to negative disclosures from a romantic partner. In support of H3F, listeners who reported lower instrumentality after a face-to-face interaction with their romantic partner in which they received a negative disclosure from their partner reported lower relationship quality, less closeness with their partner, and greater feelings of frustration than listeners who reported greater instrumentality. The first two effects

emerged when controlling for pre-interaction levels of those variables which helps rule out a third variable or reverse causality explanation for these findings. This extends findings from Studies 3 and 4, in which I found that listening to a partner's negative disclosure and learning that one has not been instrumental is more aversive than either listening to a partner's negative disclosure and learning that one has been instrumental or not listening to a partner's negative disclosure in the first place. The present findings provide evidence for the effects of feelings of instrumentality in live face-to-face interactions with one's romantic partner.

In support of H3G, listeners who reported chronically low instrumentality when their partner comes to them for support reported lower relationship quality, less closeness with their partner, and lower perceived partner regard than listeners who reported chronically high instrumentality. These analyses involved measures assessed before the couples' interaction in the lab and thus, represent more general feelings of instrumentality across interactions in the relationship. This suggests that not only are feelings of (or lack of) instrumentality immediately following a single instance of a partner's negative disclosure impactful for relationship outcomes, but chronic feelings of instrumentality—that is, how instrumental listeners typically feel when their partner turns to them for support—are also predictive of relational outcomes, at least when assessed concurrently.

Study 5 also allowed me to examine the long-term consequences of listener instrumentality. However, H3H was not supported: I did not find that chronic feelings of low instrumentality predicted decreased relationship quality or closeness over the course of a year. This may be due to the many other relationship processes that can affect relationship outcomes that couples are likely experience over the course of a year—for example, relationship conflicts (e.g., Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 2003) and instances of relational growth (e.g., Gable et al., 2006). It is

also possible that chronic instrumentality in a more general sense would predict changes in relationship outcomes over time, but that chronic instrumentality in the one particular domain in which I have assessed it—when a partner seeks support—is too narrow to predict changes over an entire year. Chronic instrumentality toward all goals or in a broader range of contexts may have a stronger predictive value. This may be particularly the case for couples who do not have a lot of support conversations in their day to day life (i.e., outside of the lab). Furthermore, relationship quality was quite stable over the course of the year for couples, which suggests that there may be a limited amount of change in relationship quality to predict in this sample.

Study 5 also addressed Aim 4 by examining whether listener perceived instrumentality moderated the effect of the discloser's chronic and situational negative expressivity (as perceived by the listener) on the listener's outcomes. H4A was partially supported. Listener perceived situational instrumentality moderated the effects of the listener's perceived partner situational negative expressivity on post-interaction relationship quality, such that listeners who perceived high situational partner negativity reported worse relationship quality than those who reported low partner negativity only when they reported low feelings of situational instrumentality. However, listener perceived situational instrumentality did not moderate the effects of the listener's perceived partner situational negative expressivity on post-interaction closeness or frustration. One possible reason for this pattern is that situational feelings of instrumentality may moderate the effects of partner negativity on the listener's evaluations of their relationship with the partner, but not on their feelings toward the partner (e.g., closeness, frustration). Future work should further explore these effects on different types of relational outcomes.

Finally, H4B, which examined whether listeners' chronic perceived instrumentality moderated the effects of listeners' perceived chronic negative expressivity from the partner, was

also partially supported: Listeners' chronic perceived instrumentality moderated the effects of perceived chronic partner negative expressivity on feelings of closeness and perceived partner regard. For both of these variables, the pattern indicated that listeners who perceived chronically high levels of partner negativity reported less closeness and lower perceived partner regard than those who reported low levels of partner negativity only when they also reported chronically low feelings of instrumentality. In other words, a partner's negative expressivity in and of itself does not have to be aversive; rather, it is only when a partner's high levels of negative expressivity combine with one's own feelings of being non-instrumental to the partner when the partner seeks support that the negativity predicts less closeness and perceived regard. However, I did not find this moderation pattern when examining relationship quality. One possible explanation is that chronic feelings of instrumentality do moderate the effects of chronic negativity from a partner on some relational outcomes—particularly those that involve feelings toward the partner or perceptions of how one's partner feels—but may not affect more global evaluations of the relationship, which may be more stable. In this sample, at least, relationship quality evaluations were more stable than feelings of closeness with the partner across the one year period between the lab session and the online follow-up.

7.0 General Discussion

In this investigation, I sought to better understand the interpersonal consequences of negative expressivity from a partner. I proposed that negative expressivity provides a valuable opportunity for listeners to deepen their connections with the disclosing partner by being instrumental—that is, by facilitating, supporting, or enabling the disclosing partner’s goal pursuit in some way (e.g., Fitzsimons & Shah, 2008; Orehek, Forest, & Barbaro, 2018). However, although a partner’s negative expressivity presents the opportunity for listener instrumentality, I expected that it may actually be quite difficult to be instrumental in negative disclosure contexts. Listeners may doubt their instrumentality and experience interpersonal costs.

In order to demonstrate the importance of listeners’ feelings of instrumentality in negative disclosure contexts, I undertook a line of work with four aims: 1) examine whether negative disclosures provide a particularly good opportunity for and invite the listener to be instrumental, 2) investigate whether it is particularly challenging for listeners to be instrumental in negative disclosure contexts, 3) examine the role of listener perceived instrumentality in determining interpersonal consequences of listening to negative (and positive) disclosures from a romantic partner, and 4) examine whether listener perceived instrumentality moderates the effects of the discloser’s chronic and situational negative expressivity on listeners’ outcomes in romantic couples’ interactions.

In five studies, I found support for multiple hypotheses advanced to address these aims. Aim 1 was addressed by Studies 1 and 2 such that negative disclosures did provide an opportunity for listeners to be instrumental (in comparison to neutral and positive disclosures; Study 1 and Study 2; H1A) and were seen as invitations for listeners to be instrumental (in

comparison to neutral and positive disclosures; Study 1 and Study 2; H1B). This suggests that features of a partner's negative disclosure do provide a chance for listeners to deepen their connection and build intimacy with their partners.

Aim 2 was addressed by Studies 1, 2, and 3. In Studies 1 and 2, negative disclosures resulted in greater uncertainty among listeners about how to be instrumental in comparison to neutral (Study 2) and positive (Study 1 and Study 2) disclosures (H2A). In Study 3, participants who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback in response to a negative partner disclosure reported that this type of feedback was a more common response of their partners in such disclosure contexts than did participants who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback in the positive disclosure condition (H2B). Furthermore, exploratory analyses in Study 3 showed that participants who received no instrumentality feedback in the negative disclosure condition perceived themselves as less instrumental than participants who received no instrumentality feedback in the positive disclosure condition. Taken together, these results suggest that although a partner's negative disclosure may provide an opportunity for listeners to build and maintain their relationship by being instrumental, it may be quite difficult to capitalize on that opportunity. These findings show that listeners feel uncertain about how to be instrumental in negative disclosure contexts and this uncertainty may translate into low feelings of instrumentality when they receive negative disclosures from their partner.

Aim 3 was addressed by Studies 3, 4, and 5. In Studies 3 and 4, listeners who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback experienced interpersonal costs compared to those who imagined receiving high instrumentality feedback (H3A) and this effect was mediated by perceived instrumentality (Study 3; H3B). Exploratory analyses in Study 3 also revealed that listeners who received high instrumentality or low instrumentality feedback in the negative

disclosure condition did not experience interpersonal costs compared to their respective counterparts in the positive disclosure condition. In addition, in both the negative and positive disclosure conditions, listeners who imagined receiving low instrumentality feedback consistently reaped interpersonal costs compared to those who received no instrumentality feedback. Furthermore, in the negative disclosure condition, the high instrumentality feedback condition led to equally positive, and in some cases more positive, outcomes than the no instrumentality feedback condition. The inclusion of the no instrumentality feedback condition allowed me to gain important insight into why any differences between the low and high instrumentality feedback conditions emerged. My findings suggest that low instrumentality feedback, as least as operationalized in these studies, seems to worsen outcomes whereas high instrumentality feedback may enhance outcomes (compared to no instrumentality feedback), though less consistently.

Aim 3 was further addressed by Study 4, which showed that the low instrumentality feedback condition led to worse interpersonal outcomes than the no disclosure control condition (H3C) and the high instrumentality feedback condition led to equally positive outcomes, and even more positive perceptions of the partner's feelings about the relationship, than the no disclosure control condition (H4D). These effects were mediated by perceived instrumentality (H4E). Study 5 also addressed Aim 3. Following a face-to-face interaction in the lab, listeners who reported lower situational feelings of instrumentality reported lower relationship quality and closeness and greater frustration than those who reported greater feelings of instrumentality (H3F). Listeners who reported chronically low feelings of instrumentality when their partner comes to them for support also reported lower relationship quality, closeness, and perceived partner regard than those who reported chronically high feelings of instrumentality (H3G),

though they did not show changes in relationship quality or closeness over the course of a year (H3H). Taken together, these findings suggest that negative expressivity is not inherently harmful. Rather, when a partner's negative disclosure is paired with low feelings of instrumentality in the listener, this leads to detrimental interpersonal outcomes both immediately following the interaction and when measured concurrently with chronic perceptions of perceived instrumentality.

Aim 4 received partial support from Study 5. In support of Aim 4, listeners' perceived situational instrumentality did moderate the effects of a partner's situational negativity during a face-to-face interaction in the lab on post-interaction relationship quality such that listeners who perceived that their partner expressed high levels of negativity reported lower relationship quality than those who perceived low levels of negativity only when they also reported low feelings of instrumentality (H4A). However, I did not find such moderation on post-interaction feelings of closeness or frustration. Listeners' chronic feelings of instrumentality also moderated the effects of a partner's chronic negativity on pre-interaction closeness and perceived partner regard such that listeners who perceived their partner as typically expressing a great deal of negativity reported less closeness and lower perceived partner regard than those who perceived their partner as typically expressing low levels of negativity only when they also reported chronically low feelings on instrumentality when their partner comes to them for support (H4B). However, I did not find such moderation on pre-interaction relationship quality. This suggests that a partner's negative expressions do not have to be aversive for the listeners and that at least some interpersonal outcomes are dependent on how instrumental listeners feel.

7.1 Contributions and Future Directions

Although prior evidence regarding negative expressivity's effects on listeners has been mixed, the majority of existing work has suggested negative (e.g., Caltabiano & Smithson, 1983) rather than positive (e.g., Graham et al., 2008) interpersonal consequences for negative expressivity. The current work suggests that negative expressivity provides an opportunity for listeners to build and maintain their relationships by being instrumental to the disclosing partner, but that listeners may not always be able to capitalize on that opportunity because it is difficult to be instrumental in negative disclosure contexts. Furthermore, I found that when listeners are made to feel instrumental in response to a partner's negative disclosure, negative expressivity is not so costly—in fact, it may even confer some benefits over not receiving a negative disclosure in the first place. Unfortunately, however, when listeners do not feel instrumental—which seems to be a relatively common experience in negative disclosure contexts—negative expressivity appears to take a toll on listeners' personal and relational outcomes. This work contributes to the expressivity literature by shedding light on mixed findings regarding negative expressivity's interpersonal effects and providing a more thorough understanding of the ways in which people's communication patterns affect their relationships.

The current work also contributes to the literature on instrumentality. The People-As-Means approach (see Orehek & Forest, 2016; Orehek, Forest, & Barbaro, 2018) highlights that evaluations of partners and relationships are shaped by how instrumental relationship partners view themselves as being and how instrumental they view their partner as being. Relationship partners enjoy being instrumental and experience intrapersonal (e.g., Inagaki & Orehek, 2017) and interpersonal (e.g., Orehek, Forest, & Barbaro, 2018) rewards when instrumentality in a given relationship is high. The current findings extend existing work on instrumentality

methodologically by examining perceptions of instrumentality that arise in contexts using scripted manipulated feedback, naturally-occurring perceptions during a real face-to-face interaction with one's partner, and chronic perceptions of instrumentality in support provision contexts. It also extends work on instrumentality by illustrating the effects of perceived instrumentality in a novel domain: when a romantic partner makes negative disclosures.

The present findings also offer important insights to the support literature. The support literature has nicely documented the intrapersonal (e.g., increased happiness; Nelson et al., 2016) and interpersonal (e.g., enhanced feelings of social connection; Inagaki & Eisenberger, 2012) effects of providing support. When people provide support to others, and presumably perceive themselves as highly instrumental, they experience beneficial outcomes. However, the support literature also reveals that providing the wrong kind of support (e.g., Gable et al., 2012) or providing support to someone who needs constant support provision (e.g., Boschen et al., 2005)—both of which should lead to low feelings of instrumentality—leads to detrimental outcomes. The current findings extend this work by measuring perceived instrumentality in support contexts and illustrating that low perceived instrumentality leads to less positive perceptions of the self, partner, and relationship.

The current work has implications for how people manage their negative emotions and make decisions about how and what to disclose to a partner. Importantly, my findings illustrate that listening to a partner's negative disclosure is not inherently harmful; rather, listener perceived instrumentality is critical in determining negative expressivity's effects on listener outcomes. Some people may hold lay theories that not expressing their negative emotions to their partner is better than expressing (e.g., to avoid burdening them). However, the current work shows that when a partner expresses negativity and listeners experience high instrumentality,

listeners experience equally beneficial outcomes compared to a no disclosure control condition—and may even experience relational benefits. Furthermore, this comparison shows the effect of the listener's high perceived instrumentality in response to a partner's negative expression compared to when a partner does not disclose negative emotions in a controlled experimental paradigm. In our paradigm, participants in the no disclosure control condition had no idea that there could have been a disclosure. In real life, not disclosing one's negative emotions to a partner may have other repercussions—particularly if the partner senses that one is withholding disclosures or suppressing emotions one is experiencing. For example, the partner may feel that the discloser is hiding something, does not trust them, or does not expect that they will be able to be instrumental. In support of this idea, work on emotional suppression shows that people experience poorer well-being and lower relationship quality when they perceive a partner to have held back their emotions or to have been inauthentic in their disclosures (e.g., Impett et al., 2014). Thus, it is important that disclosers do express their authentic negative emotions to their close relationship partners and that they do so in ways that allow their listening partners to feel instrumental.

Future work should explore what behaviors disclosing partners may engage in to help their partners feel instrumental in negative disclosure and support provision contexts. In Studies 3 and 4, I manipulated feelings of instrumentality through direct, explicit feedback ostensibly from the discloser that indicated whether or not the listener had been helpful to the discloser. Preliminary data that I collected in an open-ended measure in Study 4 suggests that people sometimes learn about their instrumentality from such explicit feedback, but that they also get instrumentality-related information from other sources or partner behaviors—for example, nonverbal feedback (e.g., my partner looks visibly relieved; my partner stops crying) and their

partner's display of emotions (e.g., my partner is in a better mood; my partner calms down). One behavior that disclosers may use to help listeners increase their instrumentality is stating their goal(s) for the interaction or making it clear what they need from the listener. Horowitz and colleagues' (2001) interpersonal model suggests that when someone discloses a problem, they have a particular goal. Listeners use cues in the disclosure to react appropriately and help the discloser reach those goals. When listeners are able to successfully do this, disclosers are more satisfied with the interaction. This should lead listeners to feel highly instrumental and bring about interpersonal benefits. However, as evidenced in Studies 1, 2, and 3, listeners often feel uncertain about how to be instrumental in such contexts or may doubt their instrumentality toward their partner. In fact, support providers commonly provide the incorrect type of support that disclosers are looking for (Marigold et al., 2014). Thus, if disclosers clearly convey what type of support or behaviors they want listeners to engage in, this may lead listeners to feel more instrumental and reap interpersonal benefits.

Disclosers may also increase listeners' perceived instrumentality by engaging in behaviors that suggest they believe in listeners' ability to help them. Expressing negative emotions shows the listener that the discloser is willing to be vulnerable with the listener and conveys a high degree of trust (Barasch, 2019; Collins & Miller, 1994; Graham et al., 2008). This should suggest that the discloser believes in the listener's ability to help (assuming that the discloser has been selective in their disclosure and not broadcasted to a large group of people). However, the discloser can engage in further behaviors that bolster this sentiment. For example, in past work, when disclosers expressed that they valued the listener's input (by making statements that made the listener feel special, liked, and understood) or respected and admired the listener's abilities to solve their problem, listeners reported increased satisfaction with in the

interaction (Agne & White, 2004). Disclosers might also convey their belief in the listener's ability to help by indicating that they have specifically selected to disclose to the listener or verbally expressing their high trust in the listener. Future work should determine the effectiveness of each type of expression on listener perceived instrumentality as well as explore other behaviors that might increase the listener's perceived instrumentality (e.g., expressing a desire to cope with the problem; expressing appreciation and gratitude; Forest, Walsh, & Krueger, 2020). Future work should also explore whether there are individual differences that predict what types of behaviors disclosers engage in in order to let their listening partner know whether they have been instrumental.

Another promising direction for future work will be to explore how much of a listener's perceived instrumentality comes from verbal or non-verbal cues that the disclosing partner provides versus what is in the listener's own mind. Though it seems fruitful to intervene on the part of the disclosing partner (by determining what behaviors disclosing partners may engage in to boost the listener's perceived instrumentality), listener perceived instrumentality may be biased by other factors as well. Related constructs such as perceived responsiveness have been shown to contain components of both reality and bias through social construction (e.g., Collins & Feeney, 2000; see Fletcher & Kerr, 2010). If this is also the case for perceived instrumentality, it is important to determine what those biasing factors are and what behaviors listeners may engage in in order to boost their own feelings of instrumentality (e.g., reflecting on their support efforts). For example, relationship quality may bias perceptions of instrumentality such that highly satisfied partners may perceive themselves and their partners as more instrumental due to the positive feelings they have toward their relationship. Future work may also explore whether there

are individual differences in how instrumental people tend to feel when listening to negative disclosures and what may predict these differences.

In addition, future work should examine factors that affect how people respond to feeling instrumental versus non-instrumental to their partners. One such factor may be the attributions that listeners make regarding why they have (or not have not) been instrumental. According to attribution theory (Kelly, 1967), people seek out causal explanations for events (e.g., Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1980). People may make a dispositional attribution for an event, which assumes a behavior is caused by a characteristic of the person or a situational attribution, which assumes a behavior is caused by something outside of the person. If a listener experiences low instrumentality and attributes it to an aspect of the self (e.g., I failed to help my partner because I am a poor support provider), they may experience intrapersonal and interpersonal costs. However, if the listener experiences low instrumentality and attributes it to an aspect of the partner (e.g., my partner is someone who cannot be helped) or the situation (e.g., I did not have the time to help right now; the problem my partner is facing is not fixable), they may not experience the same negative outcomes.

Another important future direction is to examine features of relationships and individuals that serve as moderators of the effects of perceived instrumentality. For example, listeners in high-quality relationships or those who have partners who frequently reciprocate helping acts may be buffered against interpersonal costs following an instance of low instrumentality. Gender may also be an important moderator. Because women are often expected to provide help and support to their partners to a greater degree than are men (e.g., Barbee et al., 1993), perhaps women experience more costly outcomes than men when they experience low perceived instrumentality.

Although the focus of the current project was on listeners' perceptions of their instrumentality after receiving a negative disclosure from a partner, in Study 5, I did videotape the face-to-face lab discussion and collected perceived listener instrumentality measures from both couple members. Examining relations between listener-perceived instrumentality, coder-rated listener instrumentality, and discloser-perceived listener instrumentality will be an important next step.

Much of the work suggesting that negative expressivity has adverse effects on listeners and relationships comes from work in which listeners experience a high degree of negativity from their partners (e.g., depression literature; listening to trauma victims; see Wood & Forest, 2016). Continued negative expressivity from a partner may undermine listener perceived instrumentality because it suggests that the listener has not met the discloser's needs or filled their goals. Thus, it is important for future work to explore whether there are ways for listeners to maintain a sense of instrumentality even when they have partners who express a great deal of negativity (e.g., partners with high negativity baselines; depressed partners) in order for these listeners to avoid interpersonal costs. For example, listeners in such contexts may try to reappraise or reframe what being instrumental to their partner means (e.g., trying to serve goals that do not require the partner to stop expressing negativity such as making the partner feel loved or understood).

Given the strong negative outcomes associated with experiencing low instrumentality after receiving a negative partner disclosure, future work should also explore the nature of low instrumentality. In Studies 1-4, I manipulated low instrumentality using feedback that listeners may have interpreted as indicating that they had harmed their disclosing partner's goal pursuits. Future work should begin to disentangle feedback that a listener has been harmful to a partner's

goals versus feedback that indicates that listener has been of little help. Future work may also explore whether the effects of receiving low instrumentality feedback are unique to perceived instrumentality or due to the negative affect that is elicited. The mediation analyses in Studies 3 and 4 showing that perceived instrumentality mediated the effects of instrumentality condition on dependent variables suggest an important role for perceived instrumentality. However, it remains to be tested whether more general negative affect also plays a mediating role, and whether other forms of negative feedback or response from a partner (e.g., receiving an insult from a partner that is not about one's instrumentality) would have similar effects on relational outcomes.

7.2 Strength and Limitations

The current work has a number of strengths. The use of random assignment and tightly-controlled manipulations of disclosure and instrumentality feedback (Studies 1-4) permit causal conclusions regarding the role that these variables play in determining listener's outcomes. Study 5 complements this work with correlational data that allowed me to examine naturally occurring perceptions of instrumentality in face-to-face interactions with couples in the lab, as well as chronic perceptions of instrumentality with data from both members of the couple. Although longitudinal effects did not emerge as predicted, Study 5 also extended the prior studies to examine the long-term effects of perceived instrumentality. Across these studies, I was able to examine the disclosure of several negative emotions and a wide range of dependent variables including feelings about the interaction, evaluations of the self, partner, and relationship, and motivation to provide future support. I also employed samples drawn from different sources across studies, including undergraduate students, Prolific samples of individuals across the US,

and a local community sample of established romantic couples to produce differences in age and relationship length. A major strength of the current work is the consistency in results and support for most of the hypotheses I tested across studies, paradigms, and samples.

Though there are a number of strengths of these studies, there are also some limitations. Each individual study had limitations that I attempted to address in others. For example, several studies were hypothetical in nature, asking participants about their reactions to imagined interactions with their partner. However, these studies were complemented by studies that examined recalled real-life interactions (Study 2) and perceptions drawn from in-lab interactions and chronic experiences with partners (Study 5). One limitation of the current work is the lack of longitudinal effects in Study 5. This may be due to other relationship processes affecting relationship outcomes that couples experienced over the course of a year, the fact that I measured chronic perceptions of instrumentality specifically in support contexts (rather than more globally), or a limited amount of change in some relational outcomes over the course of the year. Though my experimental studies suggest that perceived instrumentality does have causal effects on listener relational outcomes in negative disclosure contexts, it is possible that these are short-lived. Perhaps other investigations that assess instrumentality more broadly, examine differences between couples who frequently versus seldom have support-seeking conversations with their partners outside of the lab, or examine change over a shorter period of time would show longitudinal effects. Future work should explore these possibilities. There were also inconsistencies across dependent variables in the moderation analyses in Study 5. For example, listener perceived instrumentality moderated the effects of listener's perceived partner situational negative expressivity on post-interaction relationship quality, but not on post-interaction

closeness or frustration. Future work should explore these moderation effects further to determine the kinds of interpersonal outcomes that are affected and under what conditions.

7.3 Conclusion

Taken together, these studies provide the first evidence that listener instrumentality is a critical determinant of negative expressivity's interpersonal effects. My findings reveal that negative expressivity provides an especially good opportunity for listeners to be instrumental to their partner, but that many listeners find it challenging to actually be instrumental in negative disclosure contexts. In addition, listeners who do not feel instrumental in response to a negative partner disclosure experience intrapersonal and relational costs, whereas listeners who feel instrumental do not—and, in fact, may even experience relational benefits compared to when they do not receive a negative disclosure at all. This work provides much-needed insight into the mixed findings that currently exist in the literature regarding negative expressivity's effects on listeners. A nuanced understanding of negative expressivity's interpersonal consequences may help couples shape their communication in desirable ways. My findings suggest that if disclosers and listeners engage in behaviors that help listeners feel instrumental, negative expressivity need not undermine—and may even enhance—relational outcomes.

Appendix A Tables

Table 1
Examples of Participants' Recalled Partner Disclosures from Study 2

Condition	Example
Negative Disclosure	We were over at her moms house one time talking and her step dad took offense to something she had said and commented how he will pray that she goes to hell for it. Later that night she told me how that really broke her heart and made her feel low and it devastated her. I held her in my arms while she cried and told her it will be alright.
Positive Disclosure	We talked about how our son is growing up, as he went poop on his potty for the first time. We discussed how proud we were of him, and how hopeful we are to be finally making progress towards moving him out of diapers. I responded in kind, the same enthusiasm as her as we discussed matters.
Neutral Disclosure	My partner told me that he was on his way to class. I said that I had to go to class that day too.

Table 2

Full ANOVA Results for Dependent Variables in Study 3

Dependent Variable	Main Effect of Disclosure Valence Condition	Main Effect of Instrumentality Feedback Type	Disclosure Valence \times Instrumentality Feedback Interaction
Commonness of Instrumentality Feedback	$F(1, 582) = .55, p = .457, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$	$F(2, 582) = 213.06, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .423$	$F(2, 582) = 6.57, p = .002, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .022$
Pleasantness of the Interaction	$F(1, 589) = 265.82, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .325$	$F(2, 589) = 497.49, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .628$	$F(2, 589) = 49.32, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .143$
Feelings about Self	$F(1, 586) = .36, p = .547, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$	$F(2, 586) = 51.78, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .150$	$F(2, 586) = .93, p = .394, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .003$
Perceived Partner Feelings about Relationship	$F(1, 588) = .07, p = .794, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .001$	$F(2, 588) = 621.54, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .679$	$F(2, 588) = 3.95, p = .020, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .013$
Feelings about the Relationship	$F(1, 588) = .05, p = .830, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .001$	$F(2, 588) = 22.03, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .070$	$F(2, 588) = .11, p = .897, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .001$
Motivation to be Instrumental in Future Support Interactions	$F(1, 589) = .01, p = .916, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .001$	$F(2, 589) = 41.97, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .125$	$F(2, 589) = .76, p = .468, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .003$

Table 3

Conditional Indirect Effects of Instrumentality Feedback Type on Dependent Variables in the Negative and Positive Disclosure Conditions in Study 3 via Listener Perceived Instrumentality

Dependent Variable	Negative: Contrast 1	Negative: Contrast 2	Positive: Contrast 1	Negative: Contrast 2	Index of Moderated Mediation: Contrast 1	Index of Moderated Mediation: Contrast 2
Pleasantness of Interaction	Indirect effect = 1.80, SE = .23, 95 % CI = (1.34, 2.25)	Indirect effect = 1.38, SE = .18, 95 % CI = (1.03, 1.74)	Indirect effect = 1.84, SE = .23, 95 % CI = (1.38, 2.29)	Indirect effect = 1.63, SE = .21, 95 % CI = (1.22, 2.04)	Indirect effect = -.04, SE = .09, 95 % CI = (-.21, .13).	Indirect effect = -.24, SE = .10, 95 % CI = (-.45, -.06)
Feelings about Self	Indirect effect = 1.58, SE = .22, 95 % CI = (1.17, 2.03)	Indirect effect = 1.22, SE = .17, 95 % CI = (.89, 1.57)	Indirect effect = 1.62, SE = .24, 95 % CI = (1.16, 2.09)	Indirect effect = 1.43, SE = .21, 95 % CI = (1.02, 1.86)	Indirect effect = -.03, SE = .08, 95 % CI = (-.19, .11).	Indirect effect = .22, SE = .09, 95 % CI = (.41, -.05)
Perceived Partner Feelings about Relationship	Indirect effect = 2.04, SE = .17, 95 % CI = (1.69, 2.38)	Indirect effect = 1.57, SE = .14, 95 % CI = (1.29, 1.86)	Indirect effect = 2.08, SE = .19, 95 % CI = (1.71, 2.44)	Indirect effect = 1.84, SE = .17, 95 % CI = (1.51, 2.17)	Indirect effect = -.04, SE = .10, 95 % CI = (-.23, .15)	Indirect effect = .28, SE = .11, 95 % CI = (.50, -.07)
Motivation to be Instrumental in	Indirect effect	Indirect effect	Indirect effect	Indirect effect	Indirect effect	Indirect effect

Future Support	= 1.06, SE	= .81, SE	= 1.08, SE	= .96, SE	= -.02, SE	.14, SE = .06,
Interactions	= .23, 95	= .18, 95 %	= .24, 95	= .21, 95	= .05, 95	95 % CI = (-
	% CI = (CI = (.46,	% CI =	% CI =	% CI = (-	.28, -.04)
	.60, 1.53)	1.18)	(.62, 1.56)	(.55, 1.37)	.13, .08).	
Feelings about	Ind	Ind	Ind	Ind	Ind	Indire
Relationship	irect effect	irect effect	irect effect	irect effect	irect effect	ct effect = -
	= .96, SE	= .74, SE	= .98, SE	= .87, SE	= -.02, SE	.13, SE = .06,
	= .20, 95	= .16 , 95	= .21, 95	= .19, 95	= .05, 95	95 % CI = (-
	% CI =	% CI =	% CI =	% CI = (% CI = (-	.26, -.03)
	(.58, 1.37)	(.44, 1.06)	(.58, 1.40)	.51, 1.25)	.11, .07)	

Table 4

H3B: Indirect Effects of Condition on Dependent Variables in Study 4 via Listeners Perceived

Instrumentality			
Dependent Variable	Contrast 1	Contrast 2	Contrast 3
Pleasantness of Interaction	Indirect effect = 1.01, SE = .19, 95 % CI = (.66, 1.41)	Indirect effect = 1.01, SE = .19, 95 % CI = (.65, 1.41)	Indirect effect = 1.27, SE = .22, 95 % CI = (.85, 1.73)
Feelings about Self	Indirect effect = .94, SE = .20, 95 % CI = (.57, 1.38)	Indirect effect = .95, SE = .20, 95 % CI = (.58, 1.36)	Indirect effect = 1.18, SE = .24, 95 % CI = (.73, 1.69)
Perceived Partner Feelings about Relationship	Indirect effect = .95, SE = .18, 95 % CI = (.60, 1.32)	Indirect effect = .95, SE = .19, 95 % CI = (.61, 1.34)	Indirect effect = 1.18, SE = .22, 95 % CI = (.76, 1.63)
Motivation to be Instrumental in Future Support Interactions	Indirect effect = .45, SE = .18, 95 % CI = (.09, .80)	Indirect effect = .44, SE = .18, 95 % CI = (.09, .81)	Indirect effect = .56, SE = .23, 95 % CI = (.11, 1.00)
Feelings about Relationship	Indirect effect = .45, SE = .17, 95 % CI = (.12, .79)	Indirect effect = .45, SE = .17, 95 % CI = (.12, .79)	Indirect effect = .56, SE = .21, 95 % CI = (.15, .97)

Table 5

H3E: Indirect Effects of Condition on Dependent Variables in Study 4 via Listeners Perceived**Instrumentality**

Dependent Variable	Contrast 1	Contrast 2	Contrast 3
Pleasantness of	Indirect effect =	Indirect effect	Indirect effect
Interaction	.10, SE = .19, 95 % CI = (.19, .60)	= -1.43, SE = .22, 95 % CI = (-1.88, -1.03)	= .05, SE = .09, 95 % CI = (-.12, .24)
Feelings about Self	Indirect effect =	Indirect effect	Indirect effect
	.35, SE = .10, 95 % CI = (.17, .56)	= -1.25, SE = .25, 95 % CI = (-1.78, -.83)	= .05, SE = .08, 95 % CI = (-.09, .22)
Perceptions of	Indirect effect =	Indirect effect	Indirect effect
Partner's Regard and	.40, SE = .11, 95 % CI = (.21, .61)	= -1.50, SE = .21, 95 % CI = (-1.94, -1.12)	= .05, SE = .09, 95 % CI = (-.12, .24)
Satisfaction			
Motivation to be	Indirect effect =	Indirect effect	Indirect effect
Instrumental in	.16, SE = .07, 95 % CI = (.04, .32)	= -.59, SE = .22, 95 % CI = (-1.05, -.16)	= .02, SE = .04, 95 % CI = (-.04, .12)
Future Support			
Interactions			
Feelings about the	Indirect effect =	Indirect effect	Indirect effect
Relationship	.18, SE = .07, 95 % CI = (.06, .33)	= -.69, SE = .22, 95 % CI = (-1.16, -.29)	= .02, SE = .05, 95 % CI = (-.05, .12)

Table 6

No Instrumentality Feedback Condition Compared to Other Conditions Across Dependent Variables in

Study 4

Dependent Variable	No Feedback vs. Low Instrumentality Feedback	No Feedback vs. No Disclosure Control Condition	No Feedback vs. High Instrumentality Feedback
Pleasantness of Interaction	No feedback: $M = 4.08$, $SD = .98$ Low feedback: $M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.01$; $p < .001$	No feedback: $M = 4.08$, $SD = .98$ Control Condition: $M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.33$; $p < .001$	No feedback: $M = 4.08$, $SD = .98$ High feedback: $M = 5.02$, $SD = .95$; $p < .001$
Feelings about Self	No feedback: $M = 5.13$, $SD = .95$ Low feedback: $M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.31$; $p = .005$	No feedback: $M = 5.13$, $SD = .95$ Control Condition: $M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.18$; $p = .619$	No feedback: $M = 5.13$, $SD = .95$ High feedback: $M = 5.37$, $SD = 1.03$; $p = .203$
Perceived Partner Feelings about Relationship	No feedback: $M = 5.88$, $SD = .81$ Low feedback: $M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.15$; $p < .001$	No feedback: $M = 5.88$, $SD = .81$ Control Condition: $M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.04$; $p = .208$	No feedback: $M = 5.88$, $SD = .81$ High feedback: $M = 6.10$, $SD = .65$; $p = .189$
Feelings about Relationship	No feedback: $M = 6.15$, $SD = .93$ Low feedback: $M = 5.61$, $SD = 1.19$; $p = .004$	No feedback: $M = 6.15$, $SD = .93$ Control Condition: $M = 6.07$, $SD = 1.06$; $p = .648$	No feedback: $M = 6.15$, $SD = .93$ High feedback: $M = 6.13$, $SD = 1.03$; $p = .885$
Motivation to be Instrumental in Future	No feedback: $M = 6.30$, $SD = .94$ Low feedback: $M = 5.75$, $SD = 1.26$; $p = .002$	No feedback: $M = 6.30$, $SD = .94$ Control Condition: $M = 6.31$, $SD = .98$; $p = .951$	No feedback: $M = 6.30$, $SD = .94$ High feedback: $M = 6.37$, $SD = .80$; $p = .684$

Appendix B Figures

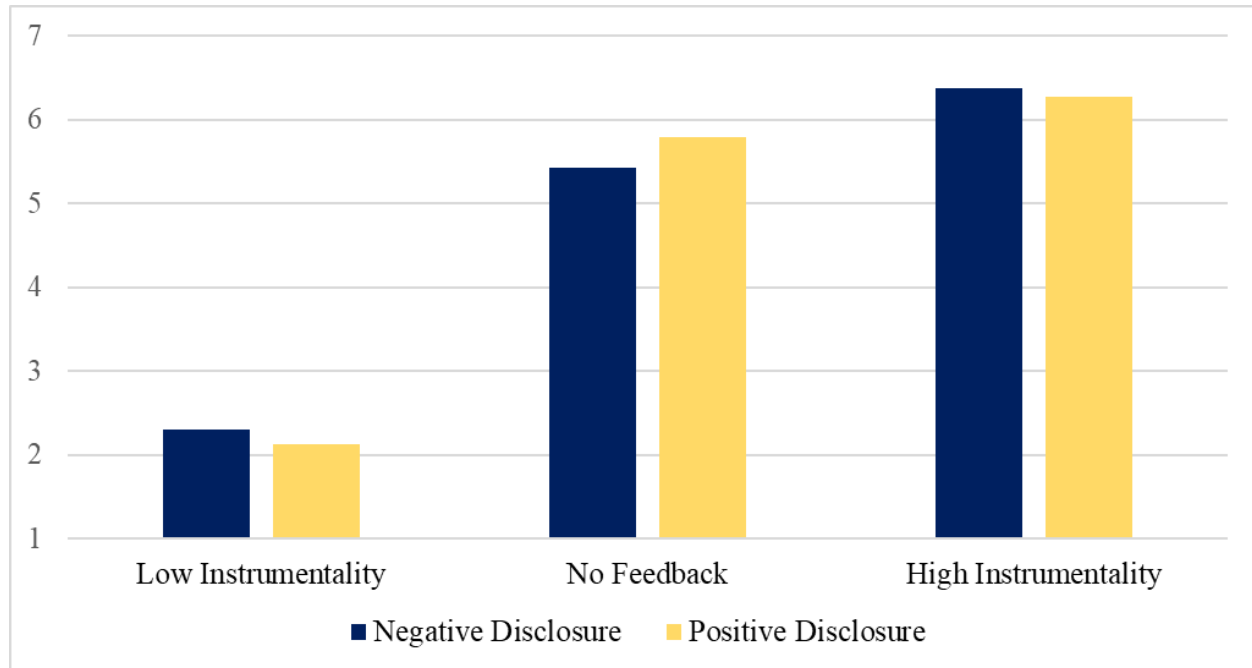


Figure 1

Disclosure Valence Condition \times Instrumentality Feedback Condition Interaction on Listener's Perceived Instrumentality in Study 3

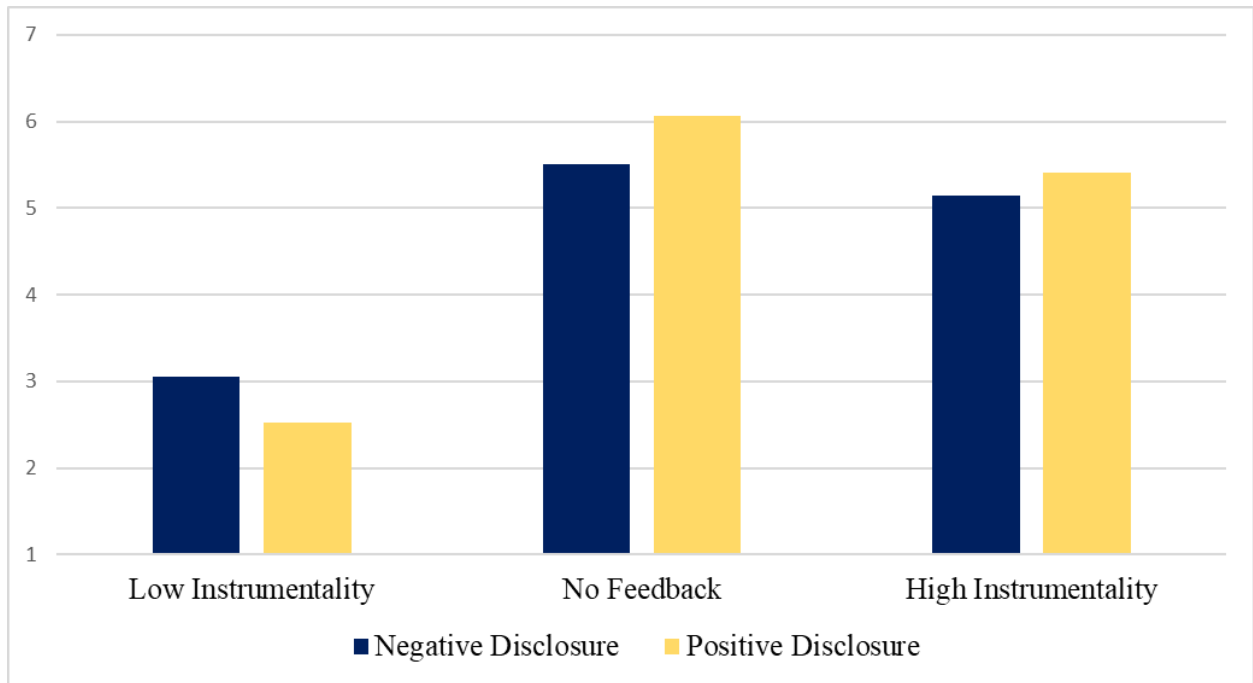


Figure 2

Disclosure Valence Condition \times Instrumentality Feedback Condition Interaction on Commonness of Instrumentality Feedback in Study 3

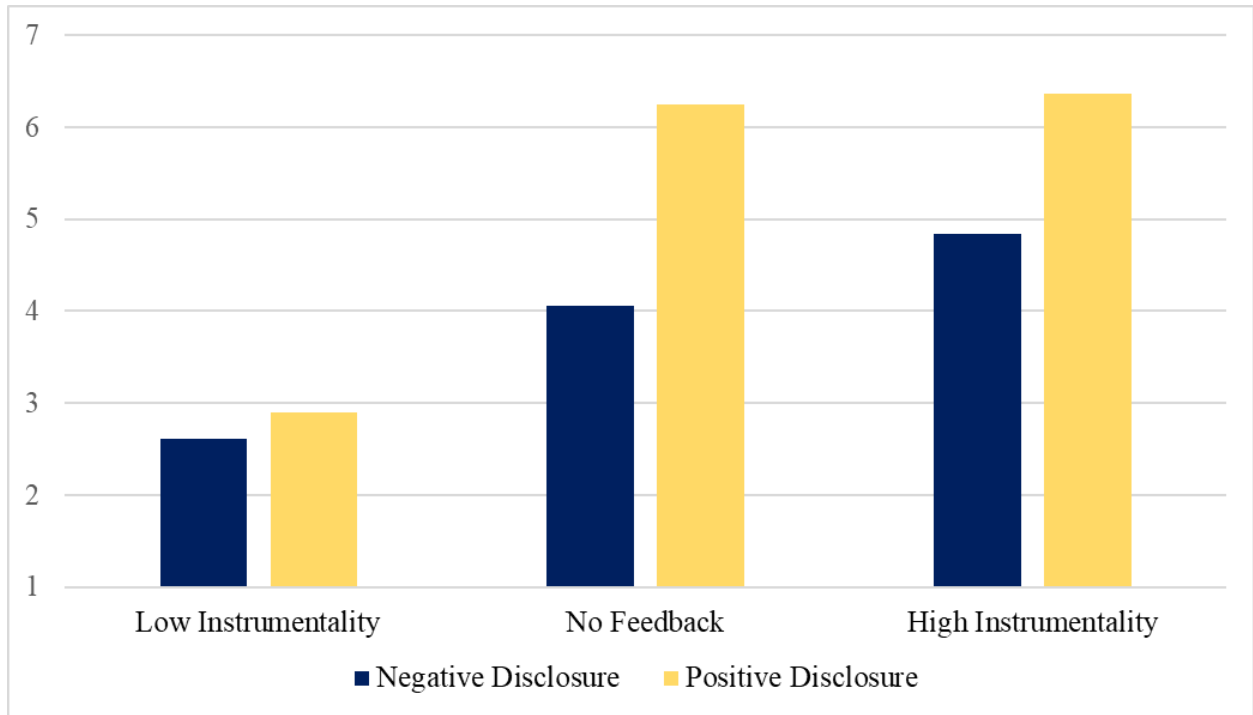


Figure 3

Disclosure Valence Condition \times Instrumentality Feedback Condition Interaction on Pleasantness of Interaction in Study 3

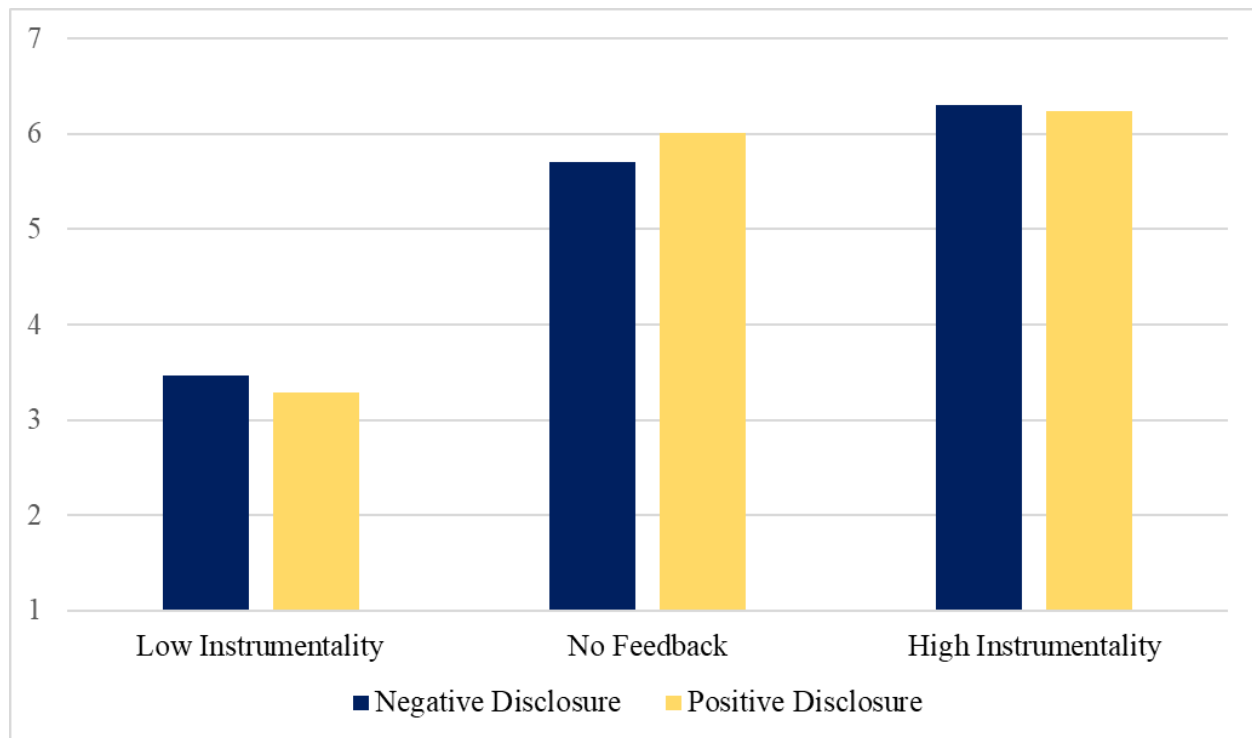


Figure 4

Disclosure Valence Condition × Instrumentality Feedback Condition Interaction on Perceived Partner

Feelings about the Relationship in Study 3

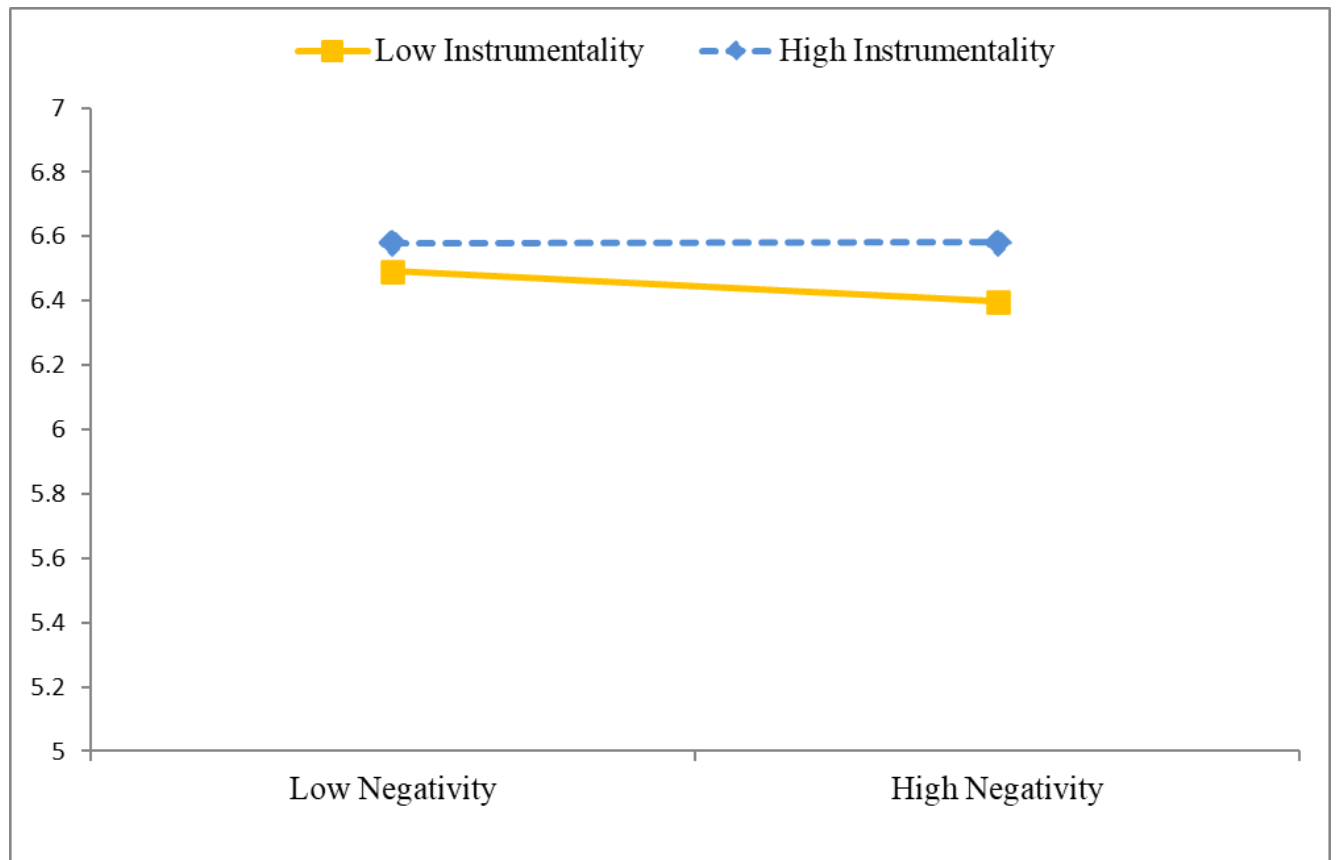


Figure 5

Situational Partner Negativity × Situational Instrumentality Interaction on Post-Interaction Relationship

Quality in Study 5

Note. Analysis controlled for pre-interaction relationship quality

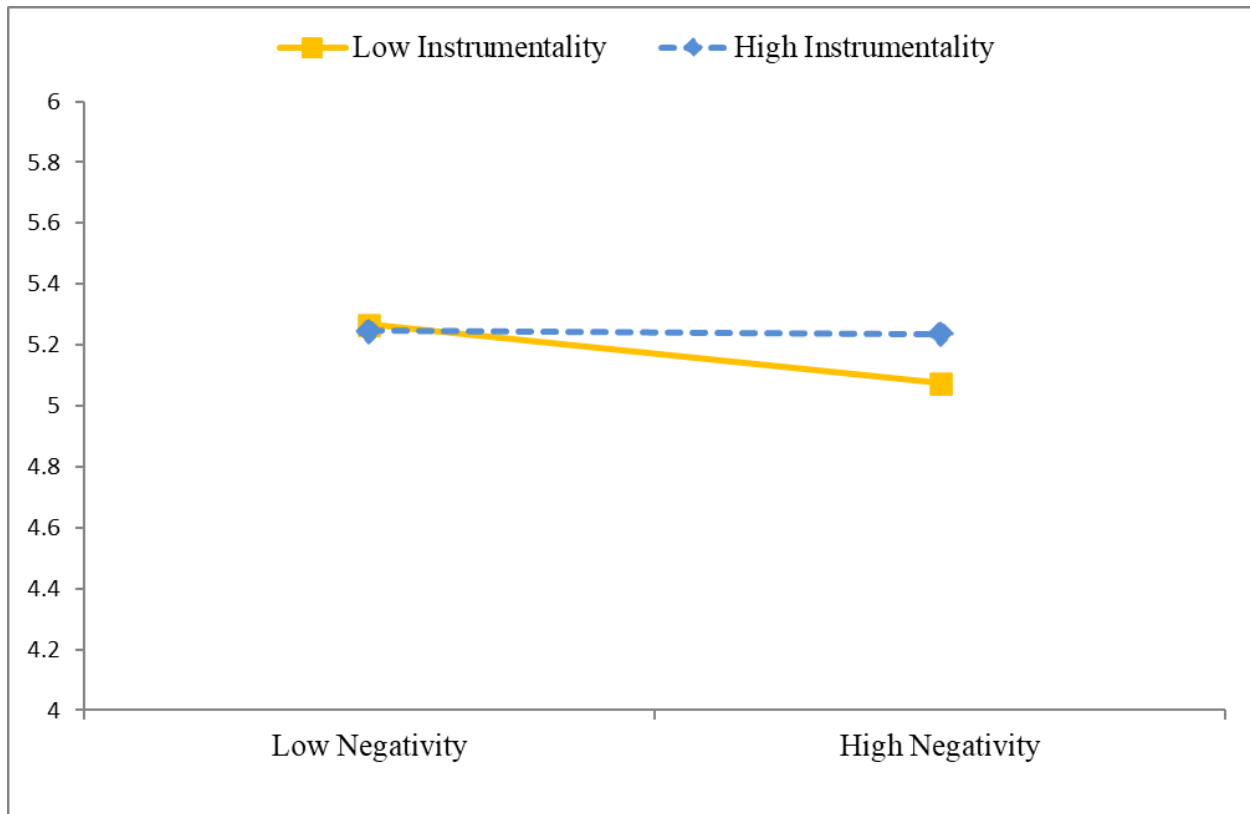


Figure 6

Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline × Chronic Perceived Instrumentality Interaction on Pre-Interaction Closeness in Study 5

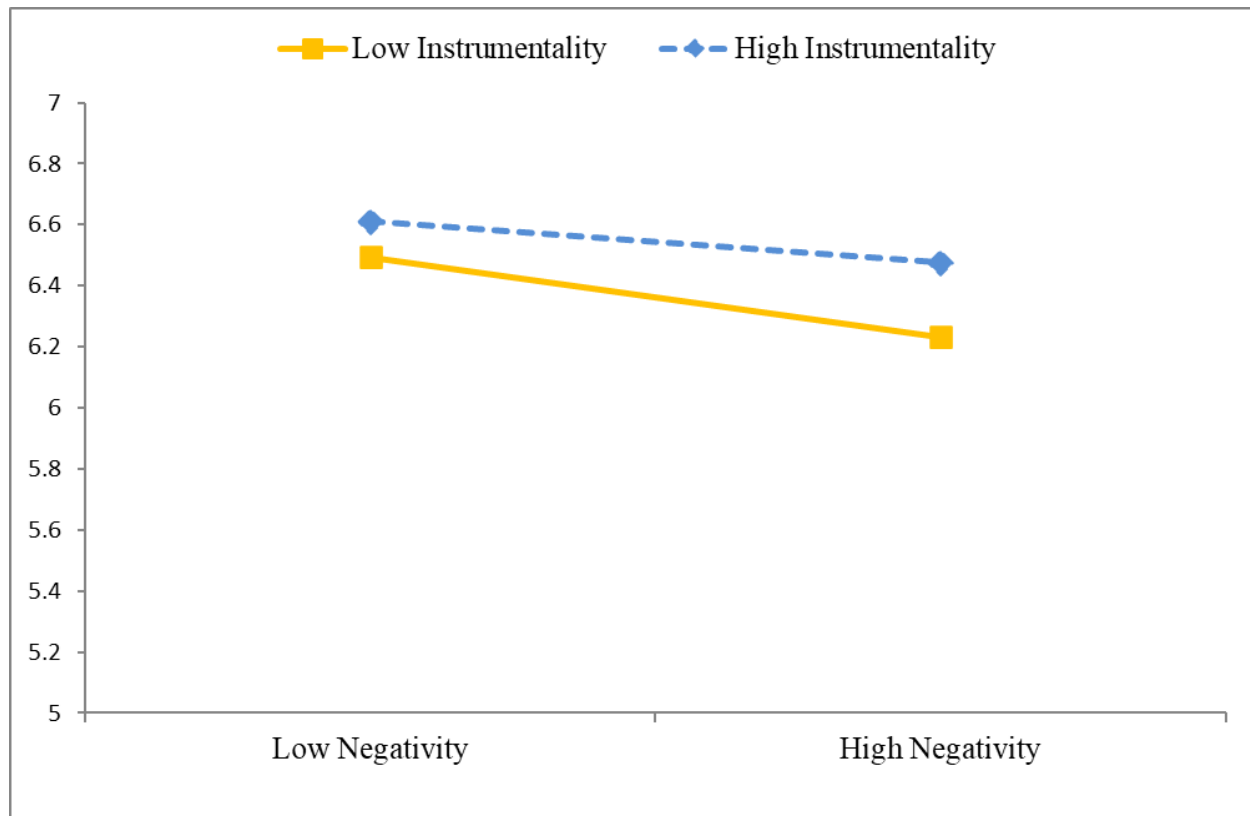


Figure 7

Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline × Chronic Perceived Instrumentality Interaction on Perceived Partner Regard in Study 5

Appendix C Study 1 Materials

NOTE: yellow highlights denote items/scales reported in the manuscript

Background Information

Please fill in the following information about yourself in order to help us understand which background variables may be related to features of social interactions. **All** information provided will be kept confidential. You may decline to answer any of the questions.

What is your prolific ID? _____

1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

2. Age: _____

3. Ethnicity (e.g., White, Black, Asian, Hispanic): _____

4. Are you romantically interested in: Men Women Both Neither

5. How would you describe your relationship status: (1) married; (2) not married, but in a committed relationship; (3) single, and dating; and (4) single, and not currently dating

[if not in a relationship]

You are not eligible for this study as it is designed for participants who are currently in a romantic relationship. Please do not continue.

[continue button sends them to end of survey]

Relationship Length

1. How long have you been in a relationship with your current romantic partner (in months)? _____ months

PRQC ****randomize order****

Please rate your current romantic partner and relationship on each item.

1 = not at all; 7 = extremely

1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?
2. How committed are you to your relationship?
3. How intimate is your relationship?
4. How much do you trust your partner?
5. How passionate is your relationship?

6. How much do you love your partner?

Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline

The following questions ask about things your romantic partner expresses to you.

Please think about the average week when answering the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
very strongly disagree		moderately disagree		neutral		moderately agree		very strongly agree

1. My partner expresses a great deal of negativity.

2. My partner expresses a great deal of positivity.

Self Esteem

Think about each statement that follows and rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it on the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
very strongly disagree		moderately disagree		neutral		moderately agree		very strongly agree

1. _____ I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

2. _____ I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

3. _____ All in all I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

4. _____ I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5. _____ I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

6. _____ I take a positive attitude toward myself.

7. _____ On the whole I am satisfied with myself.

8. _____ I wish I could have more respect for myself.

9. _____ I certainly feel useless at times.

10. _____ At times, I think I am no good at all.

Manipulation

We would like you to imagine the following scenario involving you and your romantic partner. You will be asked some questions about the scenario afterwards.

Please close your eyes for a moment and picture the situation in as much detail as you can. Think about how you would feel, and what your romantic partner and you would each do.

Please imagine that your romantic partner calls you on the phone during his/her lunch time and tells you the following:

[negative condition]

“I’m really upset. I made a big mistake at work and now I’m really nervous that I could get in a lot of trouble for it.”

[Positive condition]

“I’m really happy. I just got a big compliment from my boss about something I did at work and now I’m excited to see if a promotion is in my future.”

[neutral condition]

“I saw this new organization program at work today. I think it’s something I’ll learn to use in the future.”

Dependent Variables

[show scenario above questions]

When you have thought about the situation, please answer the following questions.

The scenario will be shown again above each set of questions.

1=Not at all, 7 = extremely

In the scenario you just read,

To what extent do you believe your partner needs help or support?

To what extent is there an opportunity to be helpful to your partner?

To what extent is there a chance for you to help your partner with a goal that he/she has?

In the scenario you just read,

To what extent do you believe your partner wants you to support him/her?

To what extent is your partner inviting you to help/support him/her?

To what extent does your partner want you to do something for him/her?

To what extent is your partner inviting you to be a part of what was happening to him/her?

To what extent do you feel motivated to meet your partner's needs?

To what extent is your partner freely choosing to tell you what he/she did to you?

To what extent is your partner intending to tell you what he/she did?

To what extent does your partner not want to tell you what he/she did?

Based on the scenario you just read,

To what extent does your partner trust you?

To what extent does your partner want to be closer to you?

To what extent does your partner want you to share in his/her life?

To what extent does your partner depend on you?

To what extent does your partner want you, specifically, to help/support him/her?

In the scenario you just read,

To what extent would you feel capable of providing support to your partner?

To what extent would you feel that your partner believes you are capable of providing support?

To what extent would you feel that your partner believes in your ability to help him/her with things?

To what extent is it clear what you should do next?

To what extent it is obvious how your partner would want you to react to him/her?

To what extent are you unsure how to act towards your partner?

Relationship quality

Please answer the following questions about how you would feel about your romantic relationship immediately after the conversation you just imagined with your partner took place:

- 1.How satisfied would you be/were you with your relationship?
- 2.How committed would you be/were you to your relationship?
- 3.How much would/did you trust your partner?

Self-Perceptions

[Imagined version] Please answer the following questions about how you would feel about yourself immediately after the conversation you just imagined with your partner took place:

- 1.To what extent would/did you feel that you are a good partner?
- 2.To what extent would/did you feel that you are caring towards your partner?
- 3.To what extent would/did you feel that you are understanding towards your partner?
- 4.To what extent would/did you feel that you are able to do things well?
- 5.To what extent would/did you feel that you are able to support your partner?

6.To what extent would/did you feel that you are able to help your partner when he/she needs help?

About the Partner

[Imagined version] Please answer the following questions about how you would feel about your romantic partner immediately after the conversation you just imagined with your partner took place:

[recalled version] Please answer the following questions about how you felt about your romantic partner immediately after the conversation that you recalled with your partner took place.

- 1.How caring would/did you view your partner as being?
- 2.How understanding would/did you view your partner as being?
- 3.How open would/did you view your partner as being?
- 4.How self-revealing would/did you view your partner as being?
- 5.How satisfied would/did you view your partner with your relationship?
- 6.How committed would/did you view your partner to your relationship?

About the scenario

How much positive emotion was expressed in the scenario you imagined?

How much negative emotion was expressed in the scenario you imagined?

How self-revealing was your partner in the scenario you imagined?

Comments Sheet

Do you have any comments about this study?

You will be redirected to Prolific to enter the completion code.

Appendix D Study 2 Materials

Background Information

Please fill in the following information about yourself in order to help us understand which background variables may be related to features of social interactions. **All** information provided will be kept confidential. You may decline to answer any of the questions.

What is your prolific ID? _____

1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

2. Age: _____

3. Ethnicity (e.g., White, Black, Asian, Hispanic): _____

4. Are you romantically interested in: Men Women Both Neither

5. How would you describe your relationship status: (1) married; (2) not married, but in a committed relationship; (3) single, and dating; and (4) single, and not currently dating

[if not in a relationship]

You are not eligible for this study as it is designed for participants who are currently in a romantic relationship. Please do not continue.

[continue button sends them to end of survey]

Relationship Length

1. How long have you been in a relationship with your current romantic partner (in months)? _____ months

PRQC ***randomize order***

Please rate your current romantic partner and relationship on each item.

1 = not at all; 7 = extremely

1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?
2. How committed are you to your relationship?
3. How intimate is your relationship?
4. How much do you trust your partner?
5. How passionate is your relationship?
6. How much do you love your partner?

Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline

The following questions ask about **things your romantic partner expresses to you.**

Please think about the average week when answering the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
very strongly disagree		moderately disagree		neutral		moderately agree		very strongly agree

1. My partner expresses a great deal of negativity.

2. My partner expresses a great deal of positivity.

Self Esteem

Think about each statement that follows and rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it on the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
very strongly disagree		moderately disagree		neutral		moderately agree		very strongly agree

1. _____ I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

2. _____ I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

3. _____ All in all I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

4. _____ I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5. _____ I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

6. _____ I take a positive attitude toward myself.

7. _____ On the whole I am satisfied with myself.

8. _____ I wish I could have more respect for myself.

9. _____ I certainly feel useless at times.

10. _____ At times, I think I am no good at all.

Manipulation

We would like you to spend several minutes thinking and writing about a situation that occurred in the past month or two. Please read all of the instructions carefully before you select the situation and begin writing.

[Negative condition]

We would like you to think of the most recent time or situation in which your romantic partner expressed a negative emotion to you (e.g., sadness, fear, anxiety, frustration) about something outside of your relationship. In other words, you should bring to mind a time when your romantic partner told you about a negative emotion that he/she was experiencing that was NOT caused by you or your relationship with him/her.

[Positive condition]

We would like you to think of the most recent time or situation in which your romantic partner expressed a positive emotion to you (e.g., happiness, pride, excitement, gratitude) about something outside of your relationship. In other words, you should bring to mind a time when your romantic partner told you about a positive emotion that he/she was experiencing that was NOT caused by you or your relationship with him/her.

[Neutral condition]

We would like you to think of a situation in which your romantic partner told you about something that he/she had experienced outside of your relationship, without expressing positive or negative emotion (e.g., a food he/she had eaten, a TV show he/she watched, what he/she did at work). In other words, you should bring to mind a time when your romantic partner told you about a neutral experience that he/she had, without expressing positive or negative emotions, that was NOT caused by you or your relationship with him/her.

Please close your eyes for a moment and picture the situation in as much detail as you can. Think about how you were feeling, what you said, and what your romantic partner said and

did.

When you have thought about the situation, please write about it.

1. What did your partner talk about in this situation/ Please tell us everything that he/she said to you:

2.How did you respond to what your partner said?

Dependent Variables

[show scenario above questions]

When you have thought about the situation, please answer the following questions.

The scenario will be shown again above each set of questions.

1=Not at all, 7 = extremely

Affording/ Inviting Instrumentality

In the scenario you just recalled,

To what extent do you believe your partner needs help or support?

To what extent is there an opportunity to be helpful to your partner?

To what extent is there a chance for you to help your partner with a goal that he/she has?

In the scenario you just recalled,

To what extent do you believe your partner wants you to support him/her?

To what extent is your partner inviting you to help/support him/her?

To what extent does your partner want you to do something for him/her?

To what extent is your partner inviting you to be a part of what was happening to
him/her?

To what extent do you feel motivated to meet your partner's needs?

To what extent is your partner freely choosing to tell you what he/she did to you?

To what extent is your partner intending to tell you what he/she did?

To what extent does your partner not want to tell you what he/she did?

Based on the scenario you just recalled,

To what extent does your partner trust you?

To what extent does your partner want to be closer to you?

To what extent does your partner want you to share in his/her life?

To what extent does your partner depend on you?

To what extent does your partner want you, specifically, to help/support him/her?

In the scenario you just recalled,

To what extent would you feel capable of providing support to your partner?

To what extent would you feel that your partner believes you are capable of providing support?

To what extent would you feel that your partner believes in your ability to help him/her with things?

To what extent is it clear what you should do next?

To what extent it is obvious how your partner would want you to react to him/her?

To what extent are you unsure how to act towards your partner?

Relationship quality

[Imagined version] Please answer the following questions about how you would feel about your romantic relationship immediately after the conversation you just

imagined with your partner took place:

[recalled version] Please answer the following questions about how you felt about your romantic relationship immediately after the conversation that you recalled with your partner took place.

4. How satisfied would you be/were you with your relationship?
5. How committed would you be/were you to your relationship?
6. How much would/did you trust your partner?

Self-Perceptions

[Imagined version] Please answer the following questions about how you would feel about yourself immediately after the conversation you just imagined with your partner took place:

[recalled version] Please answer the following questions about how you felt about yourself immediately after the conversation that you recalled with your partner took place.

7. To what extent would/did you feel that you are a good partner?
8. To what extent would/did you feel that you are caring towards your partner?
9. To what extent would/did you feel that you are understanding towards your partner?
10. To what extent would/did you feel that you are able to do things well?
11. To what extent would/did you feel that you are able to support your partner?
12. To what extent would/did you feel that you are able to help your partner when he/she needs help?

About the Partner

[Imagined version] Please answer the following questions about how you would feel about your romantic partner immediately after the conversation you just imagined with your partner took place:

[recalled version] Please answer the following questions about how you felt about your romantic partner immediately after the conversation that you recalled with your partner took place.

- 7.How caring would/did you view your partner as being?
- 8.How understanding would/did you view your partner as being?
- 9.How open would/did you view your partner as being?
- 10.How self-revealing would/did you view your partner as being?
- 11.How satisfied would/did you view your partner with your relationship?
- 12.How committed would/did you view your partner to your relationship?

About the scenario

How much positive emotion was expressed in the scenario you imagined?

How much negative emotion was expressed in the scenario you imagined?

How self-revealing was your partner in the scenario you imagined?

How much sadness did your partner express in the scenario you imagined?

How much fear did your partner express in the scenario you imagined?

How much anxiety did your partner express in the scenario you imagined?

How much frustration did your partner express in the scenario you imagined?

How much happiness did your partner express in the scenario you imagined?

How much pride did your partner express in the scenario you imagined?

How much excitement did your partner express in the scenario you imagined?

How much gratitude did your partner express in the scenario you imagined?

Comments Sheet

Do you have any comments about this study?

You will be redirected to Prolific to enter the completion code.

Appendix E Study 3 Materials

Background Information

Please fill in the following information about yourself in order to help us understand which background variables may be related to features of social interactions. **All** information provided will be kept confidential. You may decline to answer any of the questions.

What is your prolific ID? _____

1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female _____ I don't identify with any of the options above [if selected: Please enter your gender _____] _____ I prefer not to answer

2. Age: _____

3. Ethnicity (e.g., White, Black, Asian, Hispanic): _____

4. Are you romantically interested in: Men Women Both Neither

5. How would you describe your relationship status: (1) married; (2) engaged (3) cohabiting (living together), (4) exclusively dating (i.e., dating only one person), (5) casually dating (i.e., dating more than one person), (6) single

[if single]

You are not eligible for this study as it is designed for participants who are currently in a romantic relationship. Please do not continue.

Relationship Length

1. How long have you been in a relationship with your current romantic partner (in months)? _____ months

PRQC *****randomize order*****

Please rate your current romantic partner and relationship on each item.

1 = not at all; 7 = extremely

1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?
2. How committed are you to your relationship?
3. How intimate is your relationship?
4. How much do you trust your partner?
5. How passionate is your relationship?

6. How much do you love your partner?

Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline

The following questions ask about **things your romantic partner expresses to you.**

Please think about the average week when answering the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
v		mo		n		mo		v
ery		derately		eutral		derately		ery
strongly		disagree				agree		strongly
disagree								agree

1. My partner expresses a great deal of negativity.

2. My partner expresses a great deal of positivity.

The following questions ask about **things you express to your romantic partner.**

3. I express a great deal of negativity.

4. I express a great deal of positivity.

Self Esteem

Think about each statement that follows and rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it on the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
v		mo		n		mo		v
ery		derately		eutral		derately		ery
strongly		disagree				agree		strongly
disagree								agree

1. _____ I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

2. _____ I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

3. _____ All in all I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

4. _____ I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5. _____ I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

6. _____ I take a positive attitude toward myself.

7. _____ On the whole I am satisfied with myself.

8. _____ I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. _____ I certainly feel useless at times.
10. _____ At times, I think I am no good at all.

Emotional Disclosure Manipulation

An Imagined Conversation with Your Romantic Partner

We would like you to imagine the following scenario involving a conversation between you and your romantic partner. You will be asked some questions about the conversation afterwards so please read carefully.

Please close your eyes for a moment and picture the situation in as much detail as you can. Think about how you would feel, and what your romantic partner and you would each do.

Please imagine that your romantic partner calls you on the phone during his/her lunch time and tells you the following:

[Negative condition]

“I’m really upset. I made a big mistake at work and now I’m really nervous that I could get in a lot of trouble for it.”

[Positive condition]

“I’m really happy. I just got a big compliment from my boss about something I did at work and now I’m excited to see if a promotion is in my future.”

Feelings of Instrumentality Manipulation

We would like you to imagine that you respond to your partner, with the best intentions.

[Instrumental Condition]

After you have responded, your partner gives you the following response:

Thanks for listening. That was exactly what I needed to hear from you. I'm so glad that I called to tell you that.

[Non-Instrumental Condition]

After you have responded, your partner gives you the following response:

Thanks for listening but that wasn't really what I needed to hear from you. Maybe I shouldn't have called to tell you that.

[No feedback Condition]

Dependent Variables

When you have thought about the situation, please answer the following questions.

Please answer the following questions about how you would feel immediately after the conversation that you just imagined with your partner took place:

The conversation you imagined will be displayed again for you above the questions.

(Instrumentality) Manipulation Check

- 1.How helpful do you think you were to your partner in the conversation you just imagined?
- 2.To what extent do you think your response was useful to your partner in achieving goals that were important to him/her in the conversation?
- 3.How effective do you think your efforts to meet your partner's needs were in the conversation?

Feelings about Interaction

Please indicate to what extent you agree with each item:

- 1.The conversation I just imagined was enjoyable (for me).
- 2.The conversation I just imagined was satisfying (for me).
- 3.The conversation I just imagined was frustrating (for me).

- 4.The conversation I just imagined was unpleasant (for me).
- 5.The conversation I just imagined made me feel helpless.
- 6.The conversation I just imagined made me feel competent or capable.
- 7.The conversation I just imagined made me feel overwhelmed by my partner's needs.
- 8.The conversation I just imagined made me feel burdened by my partner.
- 9.The conversation I just imagined made me feel irritated or annoyed with my partner.
- 10.The conversation I just imagined made me feel excited.
- 11.The conversation I just imagined made me feel upset.

Current Mood

If that conversation really happened, immediately afterward my mood would be:

1 = Very Bad; 7 = Very Good

Efficacy as Support Provider

Based on this conversation...

- 1.To what extent do you believe that you are a good support provider?
- 2.To what extent do you believe that you are better than most people at providing support?
- 3.To what extent do you doubt your abilities as an effective support provider?

Partner Trust/ Desire for Intimacy

- 1.To what extent does your partner trust you right now? (after the conversation)
- 2.To what extent does your partner want to be close to you right now?
- 3.To what extent does your partner feel comfortable depending on you right now?

Perceived Appreciation/Regard

1. To what extent does your partner appreciate you right now?
2. To what extent does your partner value you right now?
3. To what extent does your partner regard you positively right now?

Shared Reality

- 1.To what extent do you and your partner see the world in the same way?
- 2.To what extent do you and your partner often develop a joint perspective?
- 3.To what extent do you and your partner think of things at the exact same time?
- 4.To what extent do you and your partner share the same thoughts and feelings about things?

Future Motivation to Provide Support/ Behavioral Intentions

- 1.To what extent are you motivated to support your partner in the future?
- 2.To what extent will you try to help your partner reach important goals that s/he has in future conversations?

Perceptions of Partner's Beliefs about Instrumentality

Based on the conversation you imagined,

- 1.How helpful do you think *your partner thinks* you were in that conversation?
- 2.To what extent do you think *your partner thinks* your response was useful in achieving goals that were important to him/her for that conversation?
- 3.How effective do you think *your partner thinks* your efforts to meet your partner's needs were in that conversation?

Perceptions that Partner Sees Me as a Responsive Support Provider

Based on the conversation you imagined...

- 1.To what extent do you believe that *your partner thinks* that you are a good support provider?
- 2.To what extent do you believe that *your partner thinks* that you are better than most people at providing support?
- 3.To what extent do you believe that *your partner is* unsure of your ability as a support provider?

Perceptions of Partner's Relationship Satisfaction

- 1.How satisfied do you believe your partner is with your relationship right now?
- 2.How committed do you believe your partner is to your relationship right now?
- 3.To what extent do you think your partner is having second thoughts about your relationship right now?

Current Feelings about Partner

Right now,

- 1.To what extent do you value your partner?
- 2.To what extent are you unhappy with your partner?
- 3.To what extent do you trust your partner?
- 4.To what extent do you like your partner?
- 5.To what extent are you attracted to your partner?
- 6.To what extent do you want to spend more time with your partner in the future?

Current Feelings about Relationship

Please rate your current romantic partner and relationship on each item.
1 = not at all; 7 = extremely

Right now,

- 1.How satisfied are you with your relationship?
- 2.How committed are you to your relationship?
- 3.How connected do you feel to your partner?
- 4.How intimate is your relationship with your partner?
- 5.How secure do you feel in your relationship?

Current (Relational) Feelings about Self

Right now,

- 1.To what extent do you feel like you are a good partner?
- 2.To what extent do you feel like you have a lot to offer you partner?

3. To what extent do you doubt your ability to make your partner happy?

4. To what extent do you think your partner would be better off with someone else?

Current Self-Esteem

Think about each statement that follows and rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it on the following scale.

1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

2. On the whole I am satisfied with myself.

3. At times, I think I am no good at all.

About the scenario

13. How much positive emotion was expressed in the scenario you imagined?

14. How much negative emotion was expressed in the scenario you imagined?

15. How self-revealing was your partner in the scenario you imagined?

16. How likely is it that your partner would express something similar to what you just imagined?

17. How common is it that your partner would respond similarly to the conversation that you just imagined?

Comments Sheet

Do you have any comments about this study?

It is very important for us to know whether participants are truly in a romantic relationship. We appreciate your honest answers to the questions below. You will receive your Prolific credit regardless of your answers:

a) Are you really in a romantic relationship?

You will be redirected to back to Prolific to receive your payment. Please click the (>>)

button to finish the survey.

Appendix F Study 4 Materials

Background Information

Please fill in the following information about yourself in order to help us understand which background variables may be related to features of social interactions. **All** information provided will be kept confidential. You may decline to answer any of the questions.

What is your prolific ID? _____

1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female _____ I don't identify with any of the options above [if selected: Please enter your gender _____] _____ I prefer not to answer

2. Age: _____

3. Ethnicity (e.g., White, Black, Asian, Hispanic): _____

4. Are you romantically interested in: Men Women Both Neither

5. How would you describe your relationship status: (1) married; (2) engaged (3) cohabiting (living together), (4) exclusively dating (i.e., dating only one person), (5) casually dating (i.e., dating more than one person), (6) single

[if single]

You are not eligible for this study as it is designed for participants who are currently in a romantic relationship. Please do not continue.

Relationship Length

1. How long have you been in a relationship with your current romantic partner (in months)? _____ months

PRQC *****randomize order*****

Please rate your current romantic partner and relationship on each item.

1 = not at all; 7 = extremely

1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?
2. How committed are you to your relationship?
3. How intimate is your relationship?
4. How much do you trust your partner?
5. How passionate is your relationship?

6. How much do you love your partner?

Perceived Partner Negativity Baseline

The following questions ask about **things your romantic partner expresses to you.**

Please think about the average week when answering the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
v		mo		n		mo		v
ery		derately		eutral		derately		ery
strongly		disagree				agree		strongly
disagree								agree

1. My partner expresses a great deal of negativity.

2. My partner expresses a great deal of positivity.

The following questions ask about **things you express to your romantic partner.**

3. I express a great deal of negativity.

4. I express a great deal of positivity.

Self Esteem

Think about each statement that follows and rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it on the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
v		mo		n		mo		v
ery		derately		eutral		derately		ery
strongly		disagree				agree		strongly
disagree								agree

1. _____ I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

2. _____ I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

3. _____ All in all I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

4. _____ I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5. _____ I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

6. _____ I take a positive attitude toward myself.

7. _____ On the whole I am satisfied with myself.

8. _____ I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. _____ I certainly feel useless at times.
10. _____ At times, I think I am no good at all.

Emotional Disclosure Manipulation

An Imagined Conversation with Your Romantic Partner

We would like you to imagine the following scenario involving a conversation between you and your romantic partner. You will be asked some questions about the conversation afterwards so please read carefully.

Please close your eyes for a moment and picture the situation in as much detail as you can. Think about how you would feel, and what your romantic partner and you would each do.

Please imagine that your romantic partner calls you on the phone during his/her lunch time and tells you the following:

[no emotion disclosure condition]

--participants will not be given further details about the imagined disclosure. That is, they will be told to imagine that "Please imagine that your romantic partner calls you on the phone during his/her lunch time" but will not be given any further instructions about the imagined interaction.

[Negative condition]

"I'm really upset. I made a big mistake at work and now I'm really nervous that I could get in a lot of trouble for it."

Feelings of Instrumentality Manipulation

We would you like to imagine that you respond to your partner, with the best intentions.

[Instrumental Condition]

After you have responded, your partner gives you the following response:

Thanks for listening. That was exactly what I needed to hear from you. I'm so glad that I called to tell you that.

[Non-Instrumental Condition]

After you have responded, your partner gives you the following response:

Thanks for listening but that wasn't really what I needed to hear from you. Maybe I shouldn't have called to tell you that.

[No feedback Condition]

Dependent Variables

When you have thought about the situation, please answer the following questions.

Please answer the following questions about how you would feel immediately after the conversation that you just imagined with your partner took place:

The conversation you imagined will be displayed again for you above the questions.

(Instrumentality) Manipulation Check

4.How helpful do you think you were to your partner in the conversation you just imagined?

5.To what extent do you think your response was useful to your partner in achieving goals that were important to him/her in the conversation?

6.How effective do you think your efforts to meet your partner's needs were in the conversation?

Feelings about Interaction

Please indicate to what extent you agree with each item:

12.The conversation I just imagined was enjoyable (for me).

13.The conversation I just imagined was satisfying (for me).

- 14.The conversation I just imagined was frustrating (for me).
- 15.The conversation I just imagined was unpleasant (for me).
- 16.The conversation I just imagined made me feel helpless.
- 17.The conversation I just imagined made me feel competent or capable.
- 18.The conversation I just imagined made me feel overwhelmed by my partner's needs.
- 19.The conversation I just imagined made me feel burdened by my partner.
- 20.The conversation I just imagined made me feel irritated or annoyed with my partner.
- 21.The conversation I just imagined made me feel excited.
- 22.The conversation I just imagined made me feel upset.

Current Mood

If that conversation really happened, immediately afterward my mood would be:

1 = Very Bad; 7 = Very Good

Efficacy as Support Provider

Based on this conversation...

- 4.To what extent do you believe that you are a good support provider?
- 5.To what extent do you believe that you are better than most people at providing support?
- 6.To what extent do you doubt your abilities as an effective support provider?

Partner Trust/ Desire for Intimacy

- 4.To what extent does your partner trust you right now? (after the conversation)
- 5.To what extent does your partner want to be close to you right now?
- 6.To what extent does your partner feel comfortable depending on you right now?

Perceived Appreciation/Regard

1. To what extent does your partner appreciate you right now?
2. To what extent does your partner value you right now?

3. To what extent does your partner regard you positively right now?

Shared Reality

5. To what extent do you and your partner see the world in the same way?

6. To what extent do you and your partner often develop a joint perspective?

7. To what extent do you and your partner think of things at the exact same time?

8. To what extent do you and your partner share the same thoughts and feelings about things?

Future Motivation to Provide Support/ Behavioral Intentions

3. To what extent are you motivated to support your partner in the future?

4. To what extent will you try to help your partner reach important goals that s/he has in future conversations?

Perceptions of Partner's Beliefs about Instrumentality

Based on the conversation you imagined,

4. How helpful do you think *your partner thinks* you were in that conversation?

5. To what extent do you think *your partner thinks* your response was useful in achieving goals that were important to him/her for that conversation?

6. How effective do you think *your partner thinks* your efforts to meet your partner's needs were in that conversation?

Perceptions that Partner Sees Me as a Responsive Support Provider

Based on the conversation you imagined...

4. To what extent do you believe that *your partner thinks* that you are a good support provider?

5. To what extent do you believe that *your partner thinks* that you are better than most people at providing support?

6. To what extent do you believe that *your partner* is unsure of your ability as a support provider?

Perceptions of Partner's Relationship Satisfaction

4. How satisfied do you believe your partner is with your relationship right now?
5. How committed do you believe your partner is to your relationship right now?
6. To what extent do you think your partner is having second thoughts about your relationship right now?

Current Feelings about Partner

Right now,

7. To what extent do you value your partner?
8. To what extent are you unhappy with your partner?
9. To what extent do you trust your partner?
10. To what extent do you like your partner?
11. To what extent are you attracted to your partner?
12. To what extent do you want to spend more time with your partner in the future?

Current Feelings about Relationship

Please rate your current romantic partner and relationship on each item.
1 = not at all; 7 = extremely

Right now,

6. How satisfied are you with your relationship?
7. How committed are you to your relationship?
8. How connected do you feel to your partner?
9. How intimate is your relationship with your partner?
10. How secure do you feel in your relationship?

Current (Relational) Feelings about Self

Right now,

5.To what extent do you feel like you are a good partner?

6.To what extent do you feel like you have a lot to offer you partner?

7.To what extent do you doubt your ability to make your partner happy?

8.To what extent do you think your partner would be better off with someone else?

Current Self-Esteem

Think about each statement that follows and rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it on the following scale.

4.I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

5.On the whole I am satisfied with myself.

6.At times, I think I am no good at all.

About the scenario

18.How much positive emotion was expressed in the scenario you imagined?

19.How much negative emotion was expressed in the scenario you imagined?

20.How self-revealing was your partner in the scenario you imagined?

Comments Sheet

Do you have any comments about this study?

It is very important for us to know whether participants are truly in a romantic relationship. We appreciate your honest answers to the questions below. You will receive your Prolific credit regardless of your answers:

a) Are you really in a romantic relationship?

You will be redirected to back to Prolific to receive your payment. Please click the (>>)

button to finish the survey.

Appendix G Study 5 Materials

Background Information

Please provide the following information about yourself in order to help us identify any background factors that may be related to our findings.

1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female _____ Other/Do not identify as Male or Female

2. Age: _____

3. Ethnicity (e.g., White, Black, Asian, Hispanic): _____

4. Please characterize your relationship with your partner. (**Select one**)

FRIENDS **CASUALLY DATING** **SERIOUSLY DATING** **COHABITING**

ENGAGED **MARRIED** **OTHER** _____

5. For how long (in months) have you known your partner (**Fill in**)? _____ Months

6. Were you and your partner platonic friends before you became romantically involved?

(Select one)

YES

NO

7. For how long (in months) have you been romantically involved with your partner?

_____ Months

8. On average how often do you see your partner in a week:

_____ fewer than 1 time/week

_____ 1-3 times a week

_____ 4-6 times a week

_____ 7+ times a week

9. Are you and your partner currently in a long distance relationship?(**Circle one**)

YES, DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR YES, DURING THE SUMMER

YES, DURING BOTH THE YEAR AND THE SUMMER

NO, WE ARE NEVER LONG DISTANCE

10. Are you a daily smoker? Yes / No

First, we would like you to answer some questions about yourself.

Self-Esteem

Think about each statement that follows and rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it on the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
v		mo		n		mo		v
ery		derately		eutral		derately		ery
strongly		disagree				agree		strongly
disagree								agree

1. _____ I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
2. _____ I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
3. _____ All in all I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
4. _____ I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. _____ I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. _____ I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7. _____ On the whole I am satisfied with myself.
8. _____ I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. _____ I certainly feel useless at times.
10. _____ At times, I think I am no good at all.

MEANING IN LIFE

Please take a moment to think about what makes your life and existence feel important and significant to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as

you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the scale below:

1 = Absolutely Untrue; 7 = Absolutely true

- _____ 1. I understand my life's meaning.
- _____ 2. My life has a clear sense of purpose.
- _____ 3. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.
- _____ 4. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.
- _____ 5. My life has no clear purpose.

Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements

1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

- 1. My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another.*
- 2. On one day I might have one opinion of myself and on another day I might have a different opinion.*
- 3. I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am.*
- 4. Sometimes I feel that I am not really the person that I appear to be.*
- 5. When I think about the kind of person I have been in the past, I'm not sure what I was really like.*
- 6. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality.

7. Sometimes I think I know other people better than I know myself. *
8. My beliefs about myself seem to change very frequently.*
9. If I were asked to describe my personality, my description might end up being different from one day to another day.*
10. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone what I'm really like.*
11. In general, I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am.
12. It is often hard for me to make up my mind about things because I don't really know what I want.*

TIPI

Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
disa	disa	disa	neit	agr	agr	agr
gree	gree	gree a little	her agree	ee a little	ee	ee strongly
strongly	moderately		nor		moderately	
			disagree			

I see myself as:

1. _____ Extraverted, enthusiastic.
2. _____ Critical, quarrelsome.
3. _____ Dependable, self-disciplined.
4. _____ Anxious, easily upset.
5. _____ Open to new experiences, complex.
6. _____ Reserved, quiet.
7. _____ Sympathetic, warm.
8. _____ Disorganized, careless.
9. _____ Calm, emotionally stable.
10. _____ Conventional, uncreative.

My Life Satisfaction

Please answer the following questions about yourself by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	1234567	
Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree
_____ 1.		In most ways, my life is close to ideal.
_____ 2.		The conditions of my life are excellent.
_____ 3.		I am satisfied with my life.
_____ 4.		So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.
_____ 5.		If I could live my life over, I would change almost everything.

Diener

My Beliefs

Using the scale below, please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers. [KS]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

1.A person's level of empathy is something very basic about them, and it can't be changed much. _____

2.People can always change how much empathy they generally feel for others. _____

3.People can't really change how much empathy they tend to feel for others. Some people are very empathic and some aren't and they can't change that much. _____

4.No matter who somebody is, they can always change how empathic a person they are. _____

5.Whether a person is empathic or not is deeply ingrained in their personality. It cannot be changed very much. _____

6.Anybody can change how empathic a person they are. _____

My Health

Mark the number for each statement that best describes how much that problem has bothered or distressed you **IN THE PAST MONTH**. Mark only one number for each item. At one extreme, 0 means that you have not been bothered by the problem. At the other extreme, 4 means that the problem has been an extreme bother.

0 = Never; 1 = Almost never; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Somewhat frequently; 4 = Very frequently

HOW MUCH WERE YOU BOTHERED BY:

1. Sleep problems (can't fall asleep, wake up in middle of night or early in morning)

2. Weight change (gain or loss of 5 lbs. or more)

3. Back pain

4. Constipation

5. Dizziness

6. Diarrhea

7. Faintness

8. Constant fatigue

9. Headache

10. Migraine headache

11. Nausea and/or vomiting

12. Acid stomach or indigestion

13. Stomach pain (e.g., cramps)

14. Hot or cold spells

15. Hands trembling

16. Heart pounding or racing

17. Poor appetite

18. Shortness of breath when not exercising or working hard

19. Numbness or tingling in parts of your body

20. Felt weak all over

21. Pains in heart or chest

22. Feeling low in energy

23. Stuffy head or nose

24. Blurred vision

25. Muscle tension or soreness

26. Muscle cramps

27. Severe aches and pains

28. Acne

29. Bruises

30. Nosebleed

31. Pulled (strained) muscles

32. Pulled (strained) ligaments

33. Cold or cough

CES-D

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved. Please tell us how often you have felt this way during the past week.

	During the Past Week			
	R	S	Occ	M
	arely or none of the time (less than one day)	ome or a little of the time (1-2 days)	asionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)	ost or all of the time (5-7 days)
I was bothered by things that usually				
. don't bother me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I did not feel like eating; my appetite				
. was poor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt that I could not shake off the				
. blues even with help from my family or				
friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt I was just as good as other				
. people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had trouble keeping my mind on				
. what I was doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt depressed.				
.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt that everything I did was an				
. effort.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt hopeful about the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

.	I thought my life had been a failure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.	I felt fearful.				
0.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	My sleep was restless.				
1.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I was happy.				
2.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I talked less than usual.				
3.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I felt lonely.				
4.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	People were unfriendly.				
5.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I enjoyed life.				
6.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I had crying spells.				
7.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I felt sad.				
8.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I felt that people dislike me.				
9.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I could not get "going."				
0.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Next, we would like you to answer some questions about your relationship. All responses will be kept strictly confidential.

PRQC *****randomize order*****

Please rate your current romantic partner and relationship on each item.

1 = not at all; 7 = extremely

1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?

2. How committed are you to your relationship?

3. How intimate is your relationship?

4. How much do you trust your partner?

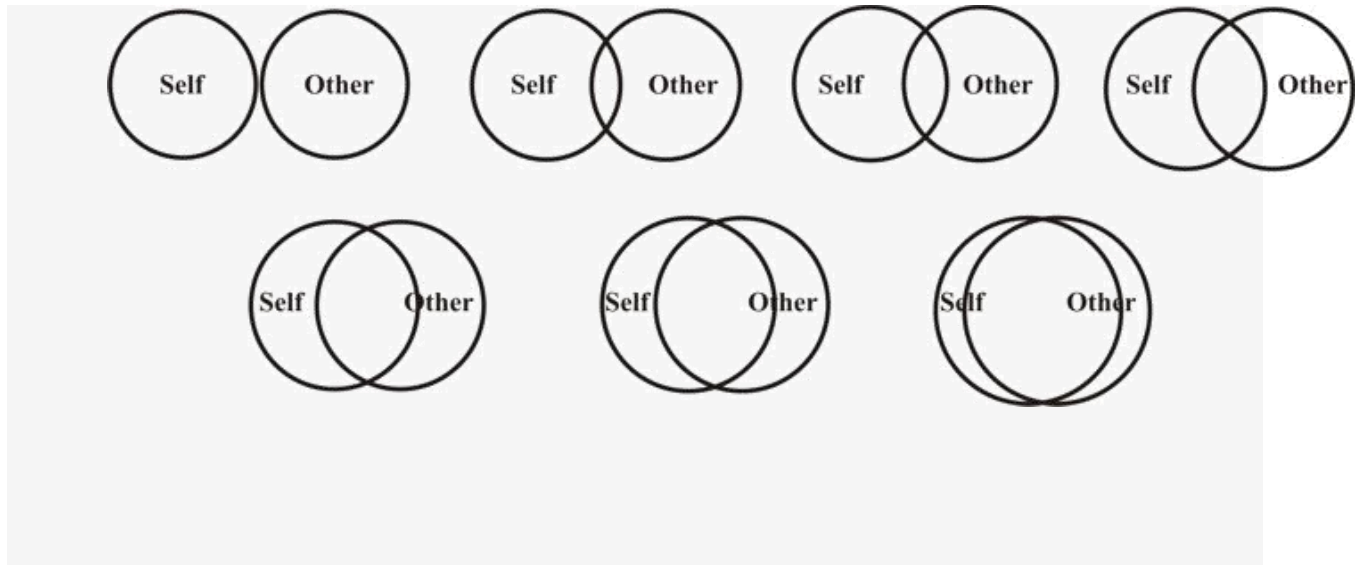
5. How passionate is your relationship?

6. How much do you love your partner?

The Inclusion of Other in the Self scale (IOS)

|

Instructions: Please circle the picture that best describes your current relationship with your romantic partner.



(You may need to scroll down to see all of the options).

Commitment

Instructions:

To what extent does each of the following statements describe your feelings regarding your relationship? Please use the following scale to record an answer for each statement listed below.

Response Scale:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Response

1) I will do everything I can to make our relationship last for the rest of our lives.

2) I feel completely attached to my partner and our relationship.

3) I often talk to my partner about what things will be like when we are very old.

4) I feel really awful when things are not going well in our relationship.

- 5) I am completely committed to maintaining our relationship.
- 6) I frequently imagine life with my partner in the distant future.
- 7) When I make plans about future events in life, I carefully consider the impact of my decisions on our relationship.
- 8) I spend a lot of time thinking about the future of our relationship.
- 9) I feel really terrible when things are not going well for my partner.
- 10) I want our relationship to last forever.
- 11) There is no chance at all that I would ever become romantically involved with another person.
- 12) I am oriented toward the long-term future of our relationship (for example, I imagine life with my partner decades from now).
- 13) My partner is more important to me than anyone else in life – more important than my parents, friends, etc.
- 14) I intend to do everything humanly possible to make our relationship persist.
- 15) If our relationship were ever to end, I would feel that my life was destroyed.

ECR-S: Specific to Current Partner

***** the order in which these items are presented should be randomized*****

The statements below concern how you feel in **emotionally in your current romantic relationship**. Respond to each statement by [*web: clicking a circle*] [*paper: circling a number*] to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement

Each item is rated on a 7-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

1. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
2. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.
3. I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back.
4. I find that my partner doesn't want to get as close as I would like.
5. I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.
6. My desire to be very close sometimes scares my partner away.
7. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
8. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
9. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
10. I get frustrated if my partner is not available when I need him/her
11. I am nervous when my partner gets too close to me.
12. I worry that my partner won't care about me as much as I care about him/her.

How My Partner Sees Me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true			So mewhat true			Ver y true

1. _____ I am confident that my partner accepts and loves me.
2. _____ My partner believes I have many good qualities.

3. _____ My partner regards me as very important in his/her life.
4. _____ My partner is responsive to my needs.
5. _____ My partner would not help me if it meant he/she had to make sacrifices.
6. _____ My partner values and admires my personal qualities and abilities.
7. _____ My partner is committed to our relationship.
8. _____ Though times may change and the future is uncertain, I know my partner will always be ready and willing to offer me strength and support.
9. _____ My partner is never concerned that unpredictable conflicts and serious tensions may damage our relationship because he/she knows we can weather any storm.
10. _____ Whenever we have to make an important decision in a situation we have never encountered before, I know my partner will be concerned about my welfare.

My Romantic Partner's Expressivity

The following questions ask about **things your romantic partner expresses to you.**

Please think about the typical week over the past month when answering the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
very strongly disagree		moderately disagree		neutral		moderately agree		very strongly agree

In the typical week:

My partner expresses a great deal of negativity.

My partner expresses a great deal of positivity.

My partner talks a lot about things that bother him/her.

My partner talks a lot about physical ailments.

My partner talks a lot about things that are going poorly for him/her.

My partner complains a lot.

My partner whines a lot.

My partner expresses sadness a lot.

My partner expresses anger a lot.

My partner expresses guilt a lot.

My partner expresses frustration a lot.

My partner expresses fear a lot.

My partner I express anxiety a lot.

My partner expresses boredom a lot.

My partner expresses shame a lot.

My partner talks a lot about things that are going well for him/her.

My partner expresses excitement a lot.

My partner expresses happiness a lot.

My partner expresses interest a lot.

My partner expresses enthusiasm a lot.

My partner expresses pride a lot.

My partner expresses joy a lot.

My partner expresses gratitude a lot.

My partner expresses love a lot.

My Expressivity

The following questions ask about **things you express to your romantic partner.**

Please think about the typical week over the past month when answering the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
very strongly disagree		moderately disagree		neutral		moderately agree		very strongly agree

In the typical week:

1. _____ I express a great deal of negativity.
2. _____ I express a great deal of positivity.
3. _____ I talk a lot about things that bother me.
4. _____ I talk a lot about physical ailments.
5. _____ I talk a lot about things that are going poorly for me.
6. _____ I have complained a lot.
7. _____ I have whined a lot.
8. _____ I express sadness a lot.
9. _____ I express anger a lot.
10. _____ I express guilt a lot.
11. _____ I express frustration a lot.
12. _____ I express fear a lot.
13. _____ I express anxiety a lot.
14. _____ I express boredom a lot.
15. _____ I express shame a lot.
16. _____ I talk a lot about things that are going well for me.
17. _____ I express excitement a lot.
18. _____ I express happiness a lot.
19. _____ I express interest a lot.
20. _____ I express enthusiasm a lot.

21. _____ I express pride a lot.
 22. _____ I express joy a lot.
 23. _____ I express gratitude a lot.
 24. _____ I express love a lot.

My Romantic Partner's Responsiveness to Me

Please answer the following questions about how **your romantic partner feels and behaves toward you.**

1	2	3	4	5	6789
not at all	somewhat	moderately	verycompletely		
true	true	true	true true		

My partner usually:

- _____ 1.... is an excellent judge of my character.
- _____ 2.... sees the “real” me.
- _____ 3.... sees the same virtues and faults in me as I see in myself.
- _____ 4.... “gets the facts right” about me.
- _____ 5.... esteems me, shortcomings and all.
- _____ 6.... knows me well.
- _____ 7.... values and respects the whole package that is the “real” me.
- _____ 8.... seems to focus on the “best side” of me.
- _____ 9.... is aware of what I am thinking and feeling.
- _____ 10.... understands me.
- _____ 11.... really listens to me.

- _____ 12.... expresses liking and encouragement for me.
- _____ 13.... seems interested in what I am thinking and feeling.
- _____ 14.... seems interested in doing things with me.
- _____ 15.... values my abilities and opinions.
- _____ 16.... is on “the same wavelength” with me.
- _____ 17.... respects me.
- _____ 18.... is responsive to my needs.
- _____ 19. ...cares about me.
- _____ 20. ...has a genuine interest in my well-being.
- _____ 21. ... is concerned about how I am feeling.

My Responsiveness to My Romantic Partner

Please answer the following questions about how **you feel and behave toward your romantic partner:**

1	2	3	4	5	6789
not at all	somewhat	moderately		very	completely
true	true	true		true	true

I usually:

- _____ 1.... am an excellent judge of my partner’s character.
- _____ 2.... see the “real” him/her (my partner).

- _____ 3.... see the same virtues and faults in my partner as he/she sees in him/herself.
- _____ 4.... “gets the facts right” about my partner.
- _____ 5.... esteems y partner shortcomings and all.
- _____ 6.... know my partner well.
- _____ 7.... value and respect the whole package that is the “real” him/her (my partner).
- _____ 8.... seem to focus on the “best side” of my partner.
- _____ 9.... am aware of what my partner is thinking and feeling.
- _____ 10.... understand my partner.
- _____ 11.... really listen to my partner.
- _____ 12.... express liking and encouragement for my partner.
- _____ 13.... seem interested in what my partner is thinking and feeling.
- _____ 14.... seem interested in doing things with my partner.
- _____ 15.... value my partner’s abilities and opinions.
- _____ 16.... am on “the same wavelength” with my partner.
- _____ 17.... respect my partner.
- _____ 18.... am responsive to my partner’s needs.
- _____ 19. ...care about my partner.
- _____ 20. ...have a genuine interest in my partner’s well-being.
- _____ 21. ... am concerned about how my partner is feeling.

Shared Reality Questionnaire (In Close Relationships)

Please rate your agreement with the following statements about you and your partner.

<i>S</i> <i>trongly</i> <i>Disagree</i>							<i>S</i> <i>trongly</i> <i>Agree</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	

1. We frequently think of things at the exact same time.
2. Through our discussions, we often develop a joint perspective.
3. We typically share the same thoughts and feelings about things.
4. Events feel more real when we experience them together.
5. The way we think has become more similar over time.
6. We often anticipate what the other is about to say.
7. We are more certain of the way we perceive things when we are together.
8. We often feel like we have created our own reality.

HOW I FEEL WHEN MY PARTNER turns to me for support:

Please respond to each statement by indicating how true it is for you, using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true			Som ewhat true			Com pletely true

When my partner turns to me for support about something that is upsetting or bothering him/her...:

- _____ 1. I feel free to be who I am.
- _____ 2. I feel like a competent person.
- _____ 3. I feel loved and cared about.
- _____ 4. I often feel inadequate or incompetent.
- _____ 5. I have a say in what happens, and I can voice my opinion.
- _____ 6. I often feel a lot of distance in our relationship.
- _____ 7. I feel very capable and effective.
- _____ 8. I feel a lot of closeness and intimacy.
- _____ 9. I feel controlled and pressured to be certain ways.

Perceived Partner Self-Esteem

Think about each statement that follows and rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it on the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
very strongly disagree		moderately disagree		neutral		moderately agree		very strongly agree

1. _____ My partner feels that he/she is a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
2. _____ My partner feels that he/she has a number of good qualities.
3. _____ All in all my partner is inclined to feel that he/she is a failure.
4. _____ My partner is able to do things as well as most other people.
5. _____ My partner feels that he/she does not have much to be proud of.
6. _____ My partner takes a positive attitude toward him/herself.

7. _____ On the whole my partner is satisfied with him/herself.
8. _____ My partner wishes he/she could have more respect for him/herself.
9. _____ My partner certainly feels useless at times.
10. _____ At times, my partner thinks he/she is no good at all.

Social Support

Please rate your partner on the statements below using the following scale.

1 = not at all

3 = quite a bit

2 = a little

4 = very much

Regarding your relationship with your romantic partner...

	To what extent can you count on him/her to listen to you when you are very angry at someone else?	1	2	3
	To what extent can you turn to him/her for advice about problems?	1	2	3
	To what extent can you really count on him/her to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress?	1	2	3
	To what extent can you count on him/her for help with a problem?	1	2	3
	If you wanted to go out and do something this evening, how confident are you that he/she would be willing to do something with you?	1	2	3
	To what extent can you count on him/her to help you if a family member very close to you died?	1	2	3
	To what extent can you count on him/her to give you honest feedback, even if you might now want to hear it?	1	2	3

Influencing my Partner

In rating each of the items below, please use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor	Agree a little	Agree	Agree Strongly

			disagree			
--	--	--	----------	--	--	--

In my relationship with my partner:

1. ____ I can get my partner to listen to what I say.
2. ____ My wishes don't carry much weight.
3. ____ I can get my partner to do what I want.
4. ____ Even if I voice them, my views have little sway.
5. ____ I think I have a great deal of power.
6. ____ My ideas and opinions are often ignored.
7. ____ Even when I try, I am not able to get my way.
8. ____ If I want to, I get to make the decisions.

Anderson & Keltner

Partner as Helpful or Harmful to Own Goals

We are interested in how your partner affects your pursuit of your goals (i.e., goals to do well in general as well as specific goals, like getting a good grade on an exam, losing ten pounds, etc.). Please answer the following questions. It is a little tricky to understand, so please read carefully.

Please indicate how much your partner helps or harms your pursuit of each type of goal below. A person is helpful to a goal if s/he makes it more likely that you will succeed. So, for example, a helpful person might be emotionally supportive or help you directly with that goal. A person is harmful to a goal if s/he makes it less likely that you will succeed. Note that being harmful for your goals doesn't mean that this person wants you to fail - simply that he or she makes it less likely that you will succeed.

[will also include “neither helpful nor harmful” at the 0 point]

Academic goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful						extremely helpful				

Career goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful						extremely helpful				

Financial goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful						extremely helpful				

Health/fitness goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful						extremely helpful				

Leisure/fun goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful						extremely helpful				

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

extremely harmful extremely helpful

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

extremely harmful extremely helpful

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

extremely harmful extremely helpful

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

extremely harmful extremely helpful

Self as Helpful or Harmful to Partner's Goals

We are interested in how you influence pursuit of the goals of your partner (i.e., his/her goals to do well in general as well as specific goals, like getting a good grade on an upcoming exam, losing ten pounds, etc.). Please answer the following questions. It is a little tricky to understand, so please read carefully.

Please indicate how much you help or harm your partner's pursuit of each type of goal below. You are helpful to his or her goal if you make it more likely that s/he will succeed. So, for example, you might be emotionally supportive or help directly with his or her goal. You are harmful to a goal if you make it less likely that s/he will succeed. Note that being harmful for goals doesn't mean that you want him or her to fail - simply that you make it less likely that s/he will succeed.

Academic goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful						extremely helpful				

Career goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful						extremely helpful				

Financial goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful						extremely helpful				

Health/fitness goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful							extremely helpful			

Leisure/fun goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful							extremely helpful			

Personal improvement/growth goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful							extremely helpful			

Service/helping others goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful							extremely helpful			

Sex/romance goals:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
extremely harmful							extremely helpful			

Social support/social connection goals:

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

extremely helpful

Thank you for answering those questions.

Please ring the bell and open the door to let the researcher know you are done. (You do not need to type anything in the box below).

Then, please sit back down at the computer (if you in the small lab room) or on the couch (if you are in the main lab room).

PRE-INTERACTION MEASURES

DISCLOSER

Next, you will be asked to have a videotaped face-to-face discussion with your partner in which you talk to your partner about **the thing in the world that you are most afraid of**. Your partner will listen and respond to you in this discussion.

THOUGHT LISTING

Before you proceed with the rest of this questionnaire, we are interested in what is on your mind right now.

Please spend the next two minutes listing any thoughts that come to mind.

(The survey will automatically advance to the next page 2 minutes after you start typing).

[set page to move ahead after 2 minutes]

THE TOPIC FOR YOUR UPCOMING DISCUSSION WITH YOUR PARTNER

Thank you, the thought-listing task is now complete.

As you learned earlier, soon, you will be asked to have a videotaped face-to-face discussion with your partner in which you talk to your partner about **the thing in the world that you are most afraid of**.

Please briefly describe **the thing in the world that you are most afraid of** (which could be a person/event/experience, etc...), that you plan to talk to your partner about in the upcoming discussion. This may be something you have talked to your partner about before, or it may not be.

The thing in the world that I am most afraid of (and will talk to my partner about in our upcoming discussion) is: _____

We will refer to the person/thing/event/experience you described above as the **target** in the following questions.

ABOUT THE TARGET

Please rate your agreement with the following items about the target—that is, _____ (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree, unless otherwise stated).

1. I feel really scared when I think about the target.
2. I find the target extremely frightening.
3. How often do you think or worry about the target? (1 = Never; 7 = Very Frequently)
4. How often have you talked to your partner about the target before? (1 = Never; 7 = Very Frequently) [IF ANY RESPONSE OTHER THAN 1 = NEVER,]
5. How deeply have you shared your thoughts and feelings with your partner about the target before? 1 = Not at all deeply; 7 = Very deeply
6. When you have talked to your partner about the target before, how supportively did he/she respond? 1 = Very unsupportively; 7 = Very Supportively
7. How does your partner's fear of the target compare to yours?
(Slider scale):

(Left) I am much more scared of it than my partner

(Middle) We are equally scared of it

(Right) My partner is much more scared of it than me

ABOUT THE UPCOMING DISCUSSION WITH YOUR PARTNER

1. Next, we would like you to imagine that you shared your deepest thoughts and feelings about this topic—the target—fully with your partner. How do you think your partner would respond?

(1 = Not at all true; 7 = Completely true)

My partner would: understand me, really listen to me; be responsive to my needs; be aware of what I was thinking and feeling; express liking and encouragement for me; seem interested in what I was thinking and feeling; be “on the same wavelength” with me; respect me; care about me; behave supportively; be attentive to me; be judgmental, trivialize my thoughts and feelings; SR forecast: share my thoughts about this fear (he/she would have the same thoughts as I do about it), share my feelings about this fear (he/she would have the same feelings as I do about it)

2. How fully do you plan to express your thoughts and feelings about this topic with your partner in the discussion you will have today in the lab? 1 = Not at all; 7 = Completely

RESPONDER

Next, you will be asked to have a videotaped face-to-face discussion with your partner in which your partner talks to you about **the thing in the world that he/she is most afraid of**. You will listen and respond to your partner in this discussion.

THOUGHT LISTING

Before you proceed with the rest of this questionnaire, we are interested in what is on your mind right now.

Please spend the next two minutes listing any thoughts that come to mind.

(The survey will automatically advance to the next page 2 minutes after you start typing).

THE TOPIC FOR YOUR UPCOMING DISCUSSION WITH YOUR PARTNER

Please briefly describe **the thing in the world that your partner is most afraid of** (which could be a person/event/experience, etc...), that you think he/she will talk to you about in the upcoming discussion. This may be something your partner has talked to you about before, or it may not be.

The thing in the world that my partner is most afraid of (and that I think he/she will talk to me about in our upcoming discussion) is:

We will refer to the person/event/experience you described above as the **target** in the following questions.

ABOUT THE TARGET

Please rate your agreement with the following items about the target that you think your partner will discuss with you—that is, ____ (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree, unless otherwise stated).

1. My partner feels really scared when he/she thinks about the target.
2. My partner finds the target extremely frightening.
3. How often does your partner think or worry about the target? (1 = Never; 7 = Very Frequently)

4. How often has your partner talked to you about the target before? (1 = Never; 7 = Very Frequently)

[IF ANY RESPONSE OTHER THAN 1 = NEVER,]

5. How deeply has your partner shared his/her thoughts and feelings with you about the target before? 1 = Not at all; 7 = Very deeply

6. When your partner has talked to you about the target before, how supportively did you respond?

Now, we would like to know how you feel about the target—that is, _____. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree, unless otherwise stated).

1. I feel really scared when I think about the target.

2. I find the target extremely frightening.

3. How often do you think or worry about the target? (1 = Never; 7 = Very Frequently)

4. How does your partner's fear of the target compare to yours?

(Slider scale)

(Left) I am much more scared of it than my partner –

(Middle) We are equally scared of it –

(Right) My partner is much more scared of it than me

[For both responder and Discloser:] Thank you for answering those questions.
(You do not need to type anything in the box below).

Please ring the bell, open the door, and sit back down at the computer (if you are in the small lab room) or on the couch (if you are in the main lab room).

DISCLOSING INSTRUCTIONS (RA will read aloud, privately, to discloser)

Discloser: Now we would like you to have a discussion with your partner in which you tell your partner about **the thing in the world that you are most afraid of while your partner listens and responds in whatever way is natural for him/her**. It is up to you how much or how little you would like to tell your partner about this—including what the thing is, how it makes you feel, why it makes you feel that way, past experiences you've had with this, and so on. It's completely up to you what to say about it. I'll ask you to talk with your partner for 7 minutes. Please tell your partner whatever about this topic you are comfortable with. If you reach a point where you have nothing more to say about it before the 7 minutes are up, you may talk about something else. Do you have any questions? [once answered] I will bring you and your partner into the same room now.

RESPONDING INSTRUCTIONS (RA will read aloud, privately, to responder)

Responder: Now we would like you to have a discussion with your partner in which your partner tells you about **the thing in the world that he/she is most afraid of while you listen and respond in whatever way is natural for you**. Do you have any questions? [once answered] I will bring you and your partner into the same room now.

DISCUSSION INSTRUCTION RECAP (RA will read aloud when both couple members are in the interaction room together)

I have started the cameras, and will ask you to have a discussion for the next 7 minutes. As a reminder, [name of discloser] will be talking about the thing in the world she is most afraid of, and [name of responder] will listen and respond in whatever way is natural. If you reach a point where you have nothing else on this topic to discuss, you may talk about other things if you choose. I'll knock on the door when the 7 minutes are up to let you know that you can wrap up. You can take another minute or two if you want, and then open the door to let me know when you're done. Do you have any questions?

Post-Interaction Measures

DISCLOSER

YOUR THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOR

Next, we would like to know about the things you did, thought, felt, or said during the discussion with your partner. Please answer the following questions.

1. Did you talk to your partner about the target) the thing in the world you are most afraid of that you wrote about before the discussion? Yes/No
2. If YES, how fully did you express your thoughts and feelings about this topic (the thing in the world you are most afraid of) with your partner in the discussion you had today in the lab? 1 = Not at all; 7 = Completely;
3. If YES, to what extent did you hold back your thoughts and feelings about this topic (the thing in the world you are most afraid of) when talking with your partner in the discussion you had today in the lab? 1 = Not at all; 7 = Completely;

3. If NO, why not? _____

4. To what extent did you do each of the following during your discussion with your partner? (1 = not at all; 7 = extremely/very frequently)

Express: fear, anxiety, sadness, anger, happiness, love, gratitude; focus on trying to describe your fear; try to work through my reactions to the target, in order to limit the distress it causes me when I think about it/in general; try to prevent myself from getting overwhelmed during the discussion; Think about what this discussion must feel like for your partner; try to take your partner's perspective, try to make the discussion pleasant for your partner, try to make the discussion less stressful for your partner, do things to try to make your partner feel good about him/herself, tell your partner how you wanted him/her to respond to you, give your partner clues about how to best support you, thank him/her for listening or supporting you, apologize, use humor to try to lighten the mood, describe ways you could manage or cope with the fear (or have done so in the past), express optimism about the fear, find a "silver lining" or good thing that has resulted from the fear, express affection for your partner, verbally or nonverbally, accept any advice/support your partner gave you, acknowledge your partner's responses as valid or helpful, criticize or reject things your partner said, try not to dwell on the target, felt like I trusted my partner, wanted to connect with my partner, was willing to be vulnerable with my partner, did not want to burden my partner

YOUR PARTNER'S THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOR

Next, we would like to know about the things that your partner did, thought, felt, or said during the discussion. Please answer the following questions.

1. My partner: understood me, really listened to me; was responsive to my needs; was aware of what I was thinking and feeling; expressed liking and encouragement for me; seemed interested in what I was thinking and feeling; was “on the same wavelength” with me; respected me; cared about me; behaved supportively; was attentive to me; was judgmental, trivialized my thoughts and feelings; SR forecast: shared my thoughts about this fear (had the same thoughts as I did about it), shared my feelings about this fear (had the same feelings as I did about it); tried to distract me; tried to change the subject of our conversation; tried to make me feel less distressed; tried to understand my point of view without trying to change how I felt (for each item, 1 = Not at all true; 7 = Completely true)

2. My partner was effective at making me feel better; I felt appreciative of my partner; My partner felt frustrated with how the conversation went; My partner was able to reduce my anxiety, at least temporarily; My partner was able to meet my needs; My partner made me feel accepted for who I am; My partner was trying to do what was best for me; My partner was trying to do what was best for him/her (for each item, 1 = Not at all true; 7 = Completely true)

Attributions

1 = disagree completely; 7 = agree completely

Please answer the following questions about your partner’s response to what you told him/her.

1. My partner’s response in this situation reflects his/her level of concern for me.
2. My partner’s response in this situation reflects how much he/she cares for me.
3. My partner’s response in this situation reflects his/her level of investment in our relationship.

4. My partner's response in this situation reflects how much he/she values me and our relationship.
5. My partner's response in this situation reflects the degree to which he/she understands my needs.

Target-Specific Shared Reality

Please rate your agreement with the following statements about **you and your partner** based on your discussion about the thing you are most afraid of (the target).

(1- Strongly Disagree, 7 – Strongly Agree)

Please rate your agreement with the following statements (1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree)

I think that my partner and I are on the same wavelength with regard to the target.
My partner feels the same way about the target as I do.
My partner agrees with my point of view of the target.
My partner and I see the target in the same way.
My partner agrees with my perception of the target.

YOUR CURRENT THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT THE TARGET

Please rate your agreement with the following items about ____ right now (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).

8. I feel really scared when I think about the target.
2. I find the target extremely frightening.
3. It is legitimately frightening.
4. There are very good reasons to be scared of it.

5. Being afraid of it is completely warranted.
6. I think a lot of people are afraid of it.
7. I think anyone who doesn't fear this thing probably should.

**YOUR CURRENT THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR
RELATIONSHIP ***randomize order*****

Please rate your current romantic partner and relationship **right now** on each item.

1 = not at all; 7 = extremely

Right now,

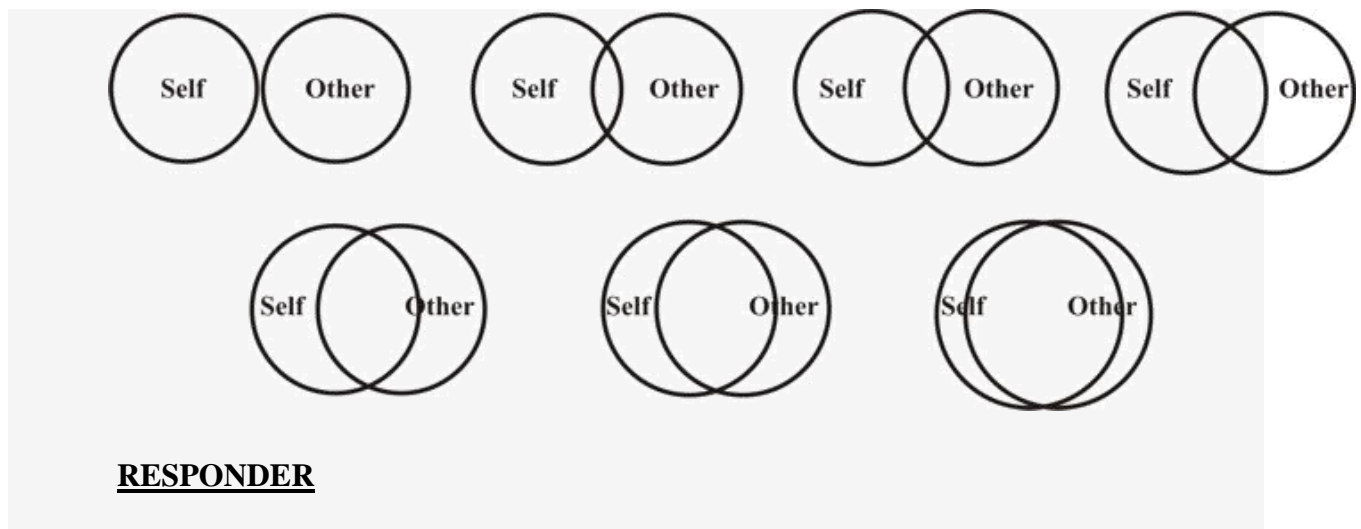
[reduced to 6 items based on scale author recommendations]

1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?
4. How committed are you to your relationship?
7. How intimate is your relationship?
10. How much do you trust your partner?
13. How passionate is your relationship?
16. How much do you love your partner?

Add: "right now. (You may need to scroll down to see all of the options)." to end
of IOS instructions below.

The Inclusion of Other in the Self scale (IOS)

Instructions: Please circle the picture that best describes your current
relationship with your romantic partner.



Next, we would like to know about the things you did, thought, felt, or said during the discussion with your partner. Please answer the following questions.

1. Did your partner talk about the fear that you predicted he/she would? Yes, same fear as I predicted; Somewhat/A similar or related fear but not exactly what I predicted; No, a completely different fear
[IF ANY ANSWER EXCEPT Yes, Same fear as I predicted,]

What fear did your partner actually talk to you about?

Please rate your agreement with the following items about the target that your partner actually did discuss with you—that is, ____ (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree, unless otherwise stated). We will refer to this as the “actual target” in the questions below.

1. My partner feels really scared when he/she thinks about the actual target.
2. My partner finds the actual target extremely frightening.

3. How often does your partner think or worry about the actual target? (1 = Never; 7 = Very Frequently)

4. How often has your partner talked to you about the actual target before? (1 = Never; 7 = Very Frequently)

[IF ANY RESPONSE OTHER THAN 1 = NEVER,]

5. How deeply has your partner shared his/her thoughts and feelings with you about the actual target before? 1 = Not at all; 7 = Very deeply

6. When your partner has talked to you about the actual target before, how supportively did you respond?

Now, we would like to know how you feel about the actual target—that is, _____. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree, unless otherwise stated).

1. I feel really scared when I think about the actual target.

2. I find the actual target extremely frightening.

3. How often do you think or worry about the actual target? (1 = Never; 7 = Very Frequently)

4. How does your partner's fear of the actual target compare to yours?

(Slider scale)

(Left) I am much more scared of it than my partner –

(Middle) We are equally scared of it –

(Right) My partner is much more scared of it than me

YOUR PARTNER'S THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOR

Next, we would like to know about the things that your partner did, thought, felt, or said during the discussion. Please answer the following questions.

1. How fully did your partner share his/her thoughts and feelings about this topic (the thing in the world he/she is most afraid of) when talking with you in the discussion you had today in the lab? 1 = Not at all; 7 = Completely

To what extent did your partner hold back his/her thoughts and feelings about this topic (the thing in the world he/she is most afraid of) when talking with you in the discussion you had today in the lab? 1 = Not at all; 7 = Completely

2. To what extent did your partner do each of the following during your discussion with your partner? (1 = not at all; 7 = extremely/very frequently) Express: fear, anxiety, sadness, anger, happiness, love, gratitude; focus on trying to describe his/her fear; try to work through his/her reactions to the target, in order to limit the distress it causes him/her when he/she thinks about it/in general; try to prevent him/herself from getting overwhelmed during the discussion;

Think about what this discussion must feel like for you; try to take your perspective, try to make the discussion pleasant for you, try to make the discussion less stressful for you, do things to try to make you feel good about yourself, tell you how he/she wanted you to respond to

him/her, give you clues about how to best support him/her, thank you for listening or supporting him/her, apologize, use humor to try to lighten the mood, describe ways he/she could manage or cope with the fear (or had done so in the past), express optimism about the fear, find a “silver lining” or good thing that has resulted from the fear, express affection for you verbally or nonverbally, accept any advice/support you gave him/her, acknowledge your responses as valid or helpful, criticize or reject things you said, try not to dwell on the target.

YOUR THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOR

Next, we would like to know about the things you did, thought, felt, or said during the discussion with your partner. Please answer the following questions.

1. I: understood my partner, really listened to my partner was responsive to my partner’s needs; was aware of what my partner was thinking and feeling; expressed liking and encouragement for my partner; seemed interested in what my partner was thinking and feeling; was “on the same wavelength” with my partner; respected my partner; cared about my partner; behaved supportively; was attentive to my partner; was judgmental, trivialized my partner’s thoughts and feelings; SR forecast: shared my partner’s thoughts about this fear (had the same thoughts as he/she did about it), shared my partner’s feelings about this fear (had the same feelings that he/she did about it); tried to distract me; tried to change the subject of our conversation; tried to make my partner feel less distressed; tried to understand my partner’s point of view without trying to change how my partner felt (for each item, 1 = Not at all true; 7 = Completely true)

I felt like...my partner trusted me, my partner wanted to connect with me, my partner was willing to be vulnerable with me, my partner did not want to burden me

2. I was effective at making my partner feel better; My partner felt appreciative of me; I felt frustrated with how the conversation went; I was able to reduce my partner's anxiety, at least temporarily; I was able to meet my partner's needs; I made my partner feel accepted for who he/she is (for each item, 1 = Not at all true; 7 = Completely true)

3. My motivations in the interaction:

I did not want to be so supportive that I encouraged my partner to keep expressing negative thoughts or feelings to me.

I did not want to affirm my partner's belief that the target is scary or worth being afraid of.

I wanted to make my partner feel better.

I felt like even if I tried to be supportive, my partner would not feel any better.

I felt like even if I tried to be supportive, my partner would not recognize or appreciate it.

I felt like my partner would not be very supportive toward me if I were telling him/her about similar thoughts/feelings.

I felt like my partner deserved a very caring and supportive response.

I felt like it was a waste of effort to try and support my partner because he/she will continue to have these fears.

Trying hard to support my partner makes me feel bad about my support-providing abilities.

I felt like my partner did not want much support

I felt like my partner did not need much support

I am tired of spending time talking about my partner's fears

I think it is better for my partner if I do not respond too supportively when she talks about this fear

I think it is better for me if I do not respond too supportively when she talks about this fear

Target-Specific Shared Reality

Please rate your agreement with the following statements about **you and your partner** based on your discussion about the thing your partner is most afraid of (the actual target)—that is, the target that your partner chose to discuss with you.

(1- Strongly Disagree, 7 – Strongly Agree)

I think that my partner and I are on the same wavelength with regard to the target.
I feel the same way about the target as my partner does.
I agree with my partner's point of view of the target.
My partner and I see the target in the same way.

I agree with my partner's perception of the target.

YOUR CURRENT THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT THE TARGET

Please rate your agreement with the following items about ____ right now (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).

1. I feel really scared when I think about the target.
2. I find the target extremely frightening.
3. It is legitimately frightening.
4. There are very good reasons to be scared of it.
5. Being afraid of it is completely warranted.
6. I think a lot of people are afraid of it.
7. I think anyone who doesn't fear this thing probably should.

YOUR CURRENT THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP

STATE PRQC *****randomize order*****

Please rate your current romantic partner and relationship **right now** on each item.

1 = not at all; 7 = extremely

Right now,

[reduced to 6 items based on scale author recommendations]

1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?

4. How committed are you to your relationship?

7. How intimate is your relationship?

10. How much do you trust your partner?

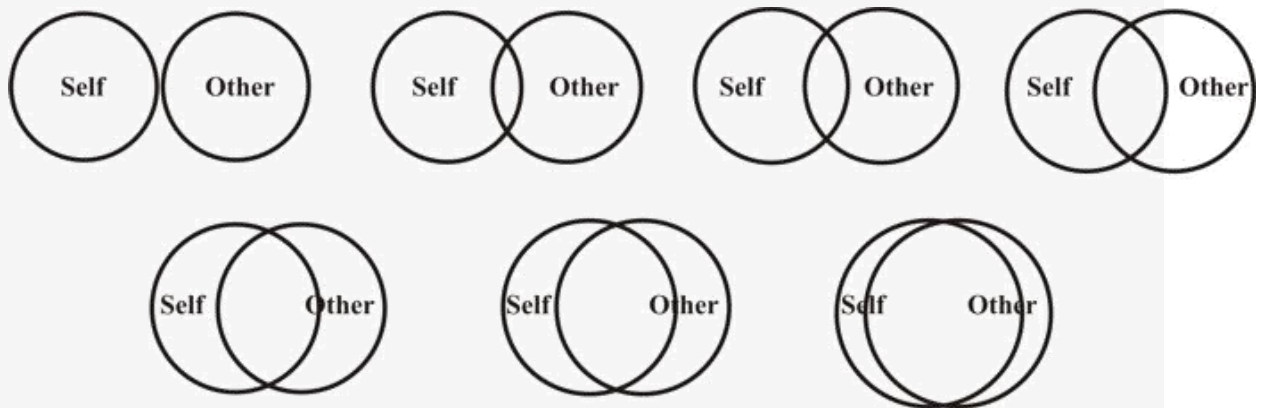
13. How passionate is your relationship?

16. How much do you love your partner?

Add: “right now. (You may need to scroll down to see all of the options).” to end of IOS instructions below.

The Inclusion of Other in the Self scale (IOS)

Instructions: Please circle the picture that best describes your current relationship with your romantic partner.



Discloser and Responder Versions:

Do you have any comments for us about what it was like to participate in this study?

[text box here]

Thank you for answering those questions. Please ring the bell and open the door let the research assistant know that you are now finished.

Then, please sit back at the computer (if you are in the small lab room) or sit back on the couch (if you are in the main lab room).

Footnotes

i The total number of participants in Studies 1-4 exceeds the number of timeslots posted. This suggests that some participants did not request credit or remuneration and were therefore not counted toward the number of fulfilled timeslots.

ii Within the negative disclosure valence condition, commonness of instrumentality feedback differed as a function of instrumentality feedback type, $F(2, 582) = 72.05$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .198$, such that low instrumentality feedback ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.84$) was rated as less common than high instrumentality feedback ($M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.64$) and no instrumentality feedback ($M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.29$; $ps < .001$), which did not differ from each other ($p = .108$). Within the positive disclosure valence condition, commonness of instrumentality feedback also differed as a function of instrumentality feedback type, $F(2, 582) = 148.56$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .338$, such that no instrumentality feedback ($M = 6.06$, $SD = 1.12$) was reported as more common than high instrumentality feedback ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.44$; $p = .004$), which was reported as more common than low instrumentality feedback ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.80$; $p < .001$).

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